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ABSTRACT

This report gives the results of a 1977 survey of secondary school principals by the National Institute of Education, Washington D.C. The purpose of the study was to empirically describe high school organization and programs and how they are affected by federal, state, and district characteristics. The results of the survey counteract many existing criticisms of today's high schools. For example, the extent of individual attention and organizational flexibility appear to be broader than is commonly thought. In addition to offering the basics, high schools provide considerable program diversity. The findings provide data to help administrators make more informed decisions about the problems high schools face in the areas of organization, management, and finance. (Author/LD)

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High School '77

A Survey of Public Secondary School Principals

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with

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Foreword

Of all American public institutions, the high school is perhaps the best known and the least understood. It is best known because, after all, just about everyone has attended. It is least understood because the adults of today depend upon perspectives gained yesterday as students or upon secondhand information rather than firsthand observation.

From such a limited viewpoint the high school may appear to be narrow, arbitrary, paternalistic, and anachronistic. But viewed from other perspectives, the high school comes off considerably better. When investigated carefully, as in this study, high schools cannot be stereotyped as rigid, mindless, or autocratic. In fact the opposite is often true; many high schools are flexibly organized, focusing upon student interests and governed in large part by a consensus of faculty and administrators.

Because an accurate picture of today's high school is essential, the National Association of Secondary School Principals collaborated with the National Institute of Education to investigate in some detail the high school of 1977. Old assumptions about high schools simply were no longer productive for anyone—researcher and layman alike. Schools, like other front-line institutions, constantly respond to the social forces pushing upon them year by year. A strong need existed to document the changes of the last decade.

Based upon the data gathered and reported here one could safely state that high schools are neither as inadequate as the critics charge nor as peerless as their proponents would hope. Certainly they are different than stereotyped, however. That point is central to this study.

The report affords excellent insight into the catacombs of the contemporary high school rather than providing another view of the facade. It investigates the mechanisms of school coordination and structure as well as describing the school curriculum. It explores the nature of school bureaucracy in addition to school size and student composition.

We hope that this report will provide useful baseline data for persons interested in the American public high school. It provides not only a more accurate profile than do older reports, but also suggests some important new avenues for investigation.

This report also provides evidence that the National Institute of Education considers practical research to be important and is committed to finding ways to improve high schools by working with practitioners.

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1. *Introduction*

A barrage of criticisms has been leveled at American secondary education in general and high schools in particular in recent years. No fewer than three commissioned reports¹ in the early seventies condemned high schools for not meeting the needs of students and society. The reports contended that high schools are bureaucratic institutions in a pejorative sense, staffed with authoritarian teachers and housing alienated or apathetic students. High schools were accused of imposing needlessly standardized requirements for promotion and graduation and forcing students through a time-bound schooling experience that rewards attendance rather than educational attainment. Critics accused schools of enforcing age segregation, preventing students from gaining work experience, and generally making it hard for students to learn about the "real world."

To remedy this situation, reformers have offered numerous proposals to make schools more responsive: Modernize curriculums, individualize instruction, provide workplace- and community-based alternatives outside high schools, make schools smaller by dividing them into subunits, allow early exit, and institute flexible grading and scheduling systems.

Part of the criticism has arisen from changing and varied expectations. What are high schools supposed to do? Opinions have changed drastically since 1960. In 1959, James B. Conant called for large, comprehensive high schools with student bodies of 400 or more.² He argued that such schools would provide a wide range of courses and services to students of diverse backgrounds and abilities. Sputnik and its psychological impact on the U.S. educational system increased the pressure on high schools to update and expand their math and especially science curriculums. The Federal Government responded, providing substantial funding for secondary education for the first time.*

*The National Defense Education Act of 1958 provided funds for upgrading high school science, mathematics, and foreign language curriculums and counseling services. The National Science Foundation and several other foundations also increased their support in these areas. Congress appropriated \$70 million in each of four successive fiscal years for equipment and materials, and for the expansion and improvement of supervisory services in the areas of science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages. Congress allocated \$15 million for the same time period for the identification, testing, guidance, and counseling of able students. Joel Spring, *The Sorting Machine* (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1976).

But during the sixties, educators provided improved curriculums in larger, better-equipped schools, only to face new kinds of criticism and unrest. The Vietnam war and the civil rights movement led adolescents to question the authority of adults and institutions. Students demanded constitutional and political rights of their own, as well as "relevance" in their curriculums. As the number of adolescents of school age and the number of adolescents attending school grew steadily, school buildings were strained beyond capacity.*

By the early seventies, grassroots participation had penetrated and changed the traditional patterns of school leadership. SAT and other achievement test scores began to decline. Everybody attacked the schools—students, parents, minorities, liberal educators, taxpayers, and politicians. Several national commissions were charged with assessing the health of secondary education. Major studies included the Coleman, Martin, and Brown reports, published at the beginning of the decade. These reports questioned whether a self-contained, comprehensive high school really could meet students' diverse needs and provide the "relevance" that the students were demanding.

Both the charges and the prescriptions of the critical reports stand on little evidence. No definitive study of high schools has been conducted since Conant published *The Comprehensive High School*³ in 1967, which examined the relationship between curricular comprehensiveness and school size. When the Rand Corporation attempted to synthesize and evaluate the Coleman, Martin, and Brown reports in its 1976 study, *Youth Policy in Transition*,⁴ they found that there were not enough data to assess the numerous and often conflicting contentions about secondary schools or to evaluate the proposed remedies. The present report on the results of the 1977 Survey of Secondary School Principals, is intended to provide an empirical basis for an assessment of the state of American secondary education by presenting an up-to-date, comprehensive description of the Nation's high schools.

The Purpose of the Description

The image we have of high schools colors the way in which we choose to evaluate them. Some envision the high school much the same as it was 30 or 40 years ago: Classrooms line long corridors and hold an average of 30 students taught by one teacher positioned at the front of the room. Students move in masses from one class to the next. Program schedules are determined at the beginning of the year and, once established, are virtually impossible to alter. Tracking is common, and students labeled early as low achievers have little chance of moving from a lower to a higher ability grouping. Images of urban high schools are even more sharply drawn: students carry identification cards for entry; drugs and violence are endemic; students are unmanageable.

*Between 1960 and 1970, the number of 14-to-24-year-olds increased from 26.7 million to 40.5 million. The proportion of 14-to-17-year-olds attending school grew from 90 percent to 94 percent of the total of persons in this age group. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, P-23, "Characteristics of American Youth: 1974" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 51.

At the same time, others hold an opposite view that high schools are overtaken by fads. Electives proliferate, the core of required courses has shrunk, and Science Fiction fulfills the English I requirement. Declining national test scores lend fuel to the view that high schools have become so lax that they no longer provide a basic education.

Implicit in both views of high schools is the judgment that student needs are not being well met. On one hand, people feel that students should receive more individualized instruction and be allowed greater flexibility in their daily schedules. On the other hand, many believe that students are not challenged enough by the courses offered. In the absence of a comprehensive examination of high schools, it has been virtually impossible to tell how well they meet any of the many, often conflicting, demands placed on them—including both demands for greater flexibility and individual attention to students and demands for greater emphasis on “back to basics.” The lack of empirical data also means that the views most people have about the high school’s ability to provide for the needs of adolescents are likely to depend on their personal examination or that of their offspring. Parents of teenagers, high school teachers and administrators, employers, and college and university professors are all likely to have strong opinions about the needs of adolescents and the adequacy of the high school to meet them.

Since we are in a period when the schools are receiving mixed signals from the society about what is expected of them, this is a most appropriate time to gather as much data as possible about what the high schools really are or are not providing. Our hope is that the information we have gathered from high school principals for this document will be a helpful guide to the system of lay and local control which must ultimately determine what is wanted from our high schools. Research can help the policy process by indicating how and in what ways the high schools are meeting the complex, often contradictory, demands being made of them.

From Description to Policy

Towards this goal, the National Institute of Education, in conjunction with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, has conducted a survey of high school principals.* To assess how well high schools meet student needs for basic and individualized instruction and personal and flexible management of their lives, we examined the nature of high school programs, management, and organization.

The results of the survey indicate that many of the commonly held stereotypes of the high school are not correct. Our work suggests that many of the needs of youth deemed important by commentators are in fact already being met in the high schools.

Chapter Three of this book, for instance, examines how the high schools are handling the following conflicting pressures:

*A similar survey was also conducted in a sample of private schools.

- Variety of course offerings versus concentration on the basics;
- Consolidation of the education function in the high school versus its dispersion into the community; and
- Uniform treatment of students versus individualized treatment.

To determine on which side of the spectrum high schools are most likely to be found, we examined how varied course offerings are, whether programs are available which provide for individual needs and preferences, and the extent to which students have opportunities to learn in nonclassroom or off-campus settings.

We find that in most cases high schools provide opportunities for both basic and individualized instruction. The core curriculum—including English, mathematics, foreign languages, sciences, art, shop, and business education—remains virtually intact. A number of less traditional courses, such as consumer education and sociology, anthropology, or psychology, are common, however. Furthermore, education does not appear to be confined solely to the school plant; a majority of schools allow students to take college courses for credit or to participate in off-campus work experience or occupational training. Schools also pay attention to individual needs. Almost two-thirds of the schools sampled offer remedial basic skills instruction, allow early graduation, and provide independent study opportunities.

Although course offerings may have become broader, the scheduling of student's time remains virtually static. Almost all the schools operate on a semester system and schedule their courses in 35- to 60- minute blocks of time.

Chapter Four examines the issue of flexibility in high school organization and management by investigating school structure and coordinating mechanisms. The role the principal emphasizes, the degree of staff specialization, and the breadth of participation in decisionmaking are the *structural* aspects explored. The methods used to *coordinate* what goes on in schools—rules, meetings, evaluation—are also examined.

We are concerned with the school's structure and its coordination mechanisms because traditional bureaucratic theory and research suggest that structure and coordination processes influence the activities and the attitudes of people working in an organization. According to classical theory, if high schools were bureaucratic, one would expect to find that managers play narrowly focussed roles, that decisionmaking is centralized, and that the staff is specialized. Coordination would be achieved through formal rules, especially rules governing the main tasks of instruction, and through frequent and regular evaluation.

Conventional theory also suggests that the structure has a bearing on the coordination mechanisms used. For example, conventional notions would predict that a school with a specialized staff would require more coordination of employees; and a leader who sees his or her role primarily as a manager would rely more on rules to coordinate activity.

The success of reform attempts depends partly on how policymakers and administrators think of the school—as a bureaucracy or as having some other organizational form. If the high school is shown to conform to theoretical no-

tions of bureaucracy, certain reforms could be initiated to make schools less bureaucratic. Such reforms would include broadening the principal's role, increasing participation in decisionmaking, and reevaluating the mechanisms of control. Alternatively, if the data indicate that schools are not bureaucratic, such reforms might not be warranted.

The survey results suggest that bureaucracy may not be the most useful metaphor to describe the organization of most high schools. Principals report playing very active and broad roles in their schools. They see themselves as managers, and as colleagues to their teaching staff; they feel they are in constant communication with students and parents. Principals report that decision-making is highly participatory. While there are rules for student behavior, rules for teachers are less common, especially regarding instructional matters. Principals do not formally evaluate teachers very frequently; nor do most principals observe teaching in classrooms often. These results do not quite fit with standard notions of bureaucracy.

The question then becomes: If high schools as reported by principals don't look like bureaucracies, what are they? Chapter Five suggests that high schools may be more like what researchers are now calling a "loosely coupled" organization. In such an organization there is little or no relationship between formal structure and the coordination of actual activity.

As an example of how this viewpoint can be applied, consider the question of principals' control over teachers. In most high schools, teachers are relatively free to close their doors and teach according to professional preferences; principals do not exert much supervision over actual teaching practices. In effect, management has little control over what staff actually do.

Loose-coupling theorists explain this fact by pointing out that it is impractical for principals to exert much control over instruction. Were principals to uncover teacher incompetence, they are without the means to do much about it, given teacher organization agreements and complex grievance procedures. Therefore, it is often not in the principal's interest to either uncover or make known the existence of inadequate teaching.

But there is an important role for the school's structure to play even if it doesn't coordinate or monitor organizational activity. The structure can legitimate the school in the eyes of its community. If the community believes that special education needs have gone unmet, it behooves the school to hire a specialist. If parents feel a greater need to participate in school affairs, a parent advisory committee is formed. In each case the school is structurally responsive. Whether the specialist or the parent's group does anything is less important than that they exist.

While the results are not conclusive, the evidence is on the side of the loose-coupling metaphor. School structure appears virtually unrelated to the kinds of coordination mechanisms used. While school structure becomes more diverse and complex in response to changing environmental contexts, the same is not true of attempts at coordination. Bureaucratic theory predicts that organizations try to exert greater control on participants in turbulent times. The results

indicate, however, that coordination mechanisms remain the same regardless of environmental conditions.

The research results suggest a different view of high schools than that commonly held. This lack of congruence between public expectation and empirical reality does not appear to present any problem to the principals participating in this study, who by and large are quite satisfied with their jobs. It also appears to the principals that high schools are not as problem-ridden as is commonly assumed. Indeed, principals report that their main problems are student apathy and parents' lack of interest rather than such problems as violence.

What, then, is one to make of these results? Chapter Six considers some implications of the study. The author of the chapter suggests that it is important for community members and educators alike to understand how their high school is organized and managed to minimize unsuccessful or unwarranted attempts at reform. If high schools are like loosely coupled organizations, then what needs to be changed and how change should be implemented will differ from what might be needed in a bureaucracy. The author describes three different management techniques that could be used to run a high school: "Live with Looseness," "Tighten the Ship," or "Tighten Loosely." Understanding that there are alternative ways of looking at high school management may help practitioners and community members assess their high schools with more equanimity.

As with any research endeavor, certain caveats must be issued alongside the results. Our survey is of school principals. Obviously there are many other opinions to be garnered about what is happening in high schools. We think, however, that as a start, a survey of principals about high schools is a logical source of information. We surveyed principals because we believed they would be the most knowledgeable about the overall program and the management techniques needed to run a high school. The accuracy of our information, then, depends on each principal's knowledge and awareness. We assume that answers to questions pertaining to the principal's sphere of operations are the most reliable, so the description of the high school programs, organization, and management are likely to be accurate. Questions concerning classrooms, teacher practices, and student outcomes require information from other respondents before their reliability can be confirmed. Because subsequent research is likely, we are confident that this first broad survey is a useful addition to our understanding about high schools.

In sum, the results of the survey suggest that many of the needs commentators identify as being important are being addressed by today's high school. The extent of individual attention and organizational flexibility appear to be broader than is commonly thought. High schools do not appear overly rigid. In addition to the basics, they provide considerable program diversity, and they are organized in a fashion that needs to be better understood. Furthermore, a rethinking of high school organization may suggest a reformulation of the question of student needs. How student needs can best be met in a "loosely coupled" organization is bound to differ from what is prescribed in a bureaucracy. These initial findings provide data to inform the debate about how high

schools should be organized and managed. The results provide some background for guiding local administrative action and open interesting avenues for inquiry.

NOTES

1. James S. Coleman, et al., *Youth: Transition to Adulthood*, Report of the Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); John H. Martin, et al., *National Panel on High School and Adolescent Education* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1974); B. Frank Brown, et al., *The Reform of Secondary Education: A Report to the Public and the Profession*, National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education (New York: The McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1973).
2. James B. Conant, *The American High School Today* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1959).
3. James B. Conant, *The Comprehensive High School* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1967).
4. P. Michael Timpane, Susan Abramowitz, Sue Berryman Bobrow, and Anthony Pascal, *Youth Policy in Transition* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The Rand Corporation, 1976).

2. How Schools Were Selected To Participate

In choosing a sample we took two issues into consideration. First, we wanted to make sure that schools in all regions of the country and in rural, suburban, and urban areas were well represented. To accomplish this, we randomly selected 2,000 public high schools from four regions of the country (East, South, Midwest and West; see figure 1) and from three metropolitan status areas (urban, suburban, and rural), resulting in 12 cells.* Second, we wanted to insure that the student population would be nationally representative. To accomplish this, using probability sampling, we selected schools within each cell on the basis of 12th grade enrollment. This sampling method guarantees that the number of schools in the sample represents the proportional number of students in the population that attend schools in various cells. Consequently, the sample is representative of students rather than schools. Therefore, students in rural and small schools were not overrepresented, nor were students in urban and large schools underrepresented.

The schools that received survey questionnaires represent 13 percent of the Nation's public secondary schools. Vocational schools, continuation schools, alternative schools, and schools for the handicapped were not included. Appendix B contains additional information about the sampling plan.

Response Rates

The survey instrument, a joint product of NIE and NASSP, was administered from June to September 1977. A total of 1,448 usable responses was received—a 72.4 percent response rate.

There appears to be no substantial response bias within the regional or metropolitan status categories with two exceptions. Schools in the South had a lower response rate relative to the other regions of the country, and urban

*The Curriculum Information Center, Denver, Colorado, provided the listing of the "universe" of 15,407 public secondary schools—defined as schools with a 12th-grade graduating class—from which the sample was selected.

school principals were less likely to respond than their suburban and rural counterparts. Table 1 shows the number of schools sampled in each stratifying category and the number that responded.

The Participating Schools

The high schools participating in this study range widely in enrollment, from as few as 25 students to as many as 5,091. Most of the schools have fewer than 1,000 students; the average responding school has 956. Only 7 percent of the schools participating in this study house 2,000 or more students. Enrollment distributions of the schools surveyed appear in figure 2.

While enrollment decline has been a major problem in elementary schools recently, enrollments have fallen in only one-fourth of the responding high schools during the 5-year period from 1971 to 1976. In fact, 43 percent of the responding principals reported that their enrollments actually increased during this time.

Most of the schools participating in this survey are high schools spanning grades 9 through 12 (50 percent) or grades 10 through 12 (20 percent). Twenty

Figure 1
Survey Regions



Note: No schools in Alaska were found in the random selection.

percent are junior-senior high schools; the remaining 10 percent are secondary schools that house some elementary grades. Classified by the Census Bureau's metropolitan status categories, 60 percent of the participating schools are suburban; 32 percent, rural; and 8 percent, urban. However, the Census definitions tend to underestimate the nonmetropolitan locations: towns within the boundaries of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA),* no matter how small, are considered suburban or urban. According to principals' own reports of their locations (item 55),** 28 percent of the schools are in suburbs or small towns, 52 percent are rural, and 20 percent are in medium or large cities. Because these percentages are more representative of the distribution of students across the country than Census designations, we used principals' own reports of metropolitan status to classify schools as urban, suburban, or rural.

*An SMSA consists of a county containing a city of 50,000 inhabitants or more. A detailed explanation of the criteria used in establishing SMSA's appears in Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas*, revised edition (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975). Based on Census definitions, an "urban" school is one located in a central city (50,000 or more) of an SMSA. A "suburban" school is one located outside the designated central city, but still within the SMSA. A "rural" school is one outside of an SMSA.

**Items in parentheses refer to questionnaire items in appendix A.

Table 1. Responses by Region and Metropolitan Status

Category	Number and percent (of 1,999) Sampled		Number and percent (of 1,999) Responding		Response Rate for the Category
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Percentage
Region					
East	499	25.0%	382	26.4%	76.5%
Midwest	622	31.1	481	33.2	77.3
South	513	25.7	323	22.3	63.0
West	365	18.3	262	18.1	71.8
Metropolitan status					
Urban	167	8.5%	110	7.6%	65.9%
Suburban	1184	59.2	872	60.2	73.6
Rural	648	32.4	466	32.2	71.9

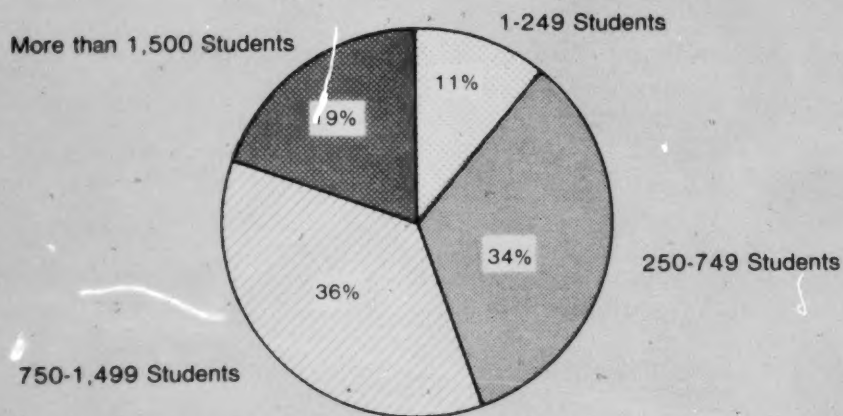
Note: Census designations of metropolitan status were used in picking the sample. However, all analyses in the text are based on the principals' own responses to item 55 in the questionnaire, asking about metropolitan status.

Principals and Their Staffs

In our sample, most high school principals are male (98 percent), white (94 percent), and between the ages of 35 and 54 (75 percent). The respondents have served as principals of their current schools for an average of 6 years. One principal in five is new to this position,* and an equal proportion of principals have occupied their current position for 10 years or more. Almost all the principals (90 percent) formerly taught at the secondary level; the typical principal taught for 8 years. The majority of principals (57 percent) had been former school administrators, usually for 2 to 5 years. Forty-three percent previously headed another school. Those who had been principals at other schools typically served for 2 to 4 years. In sum, serving as a teacher and then

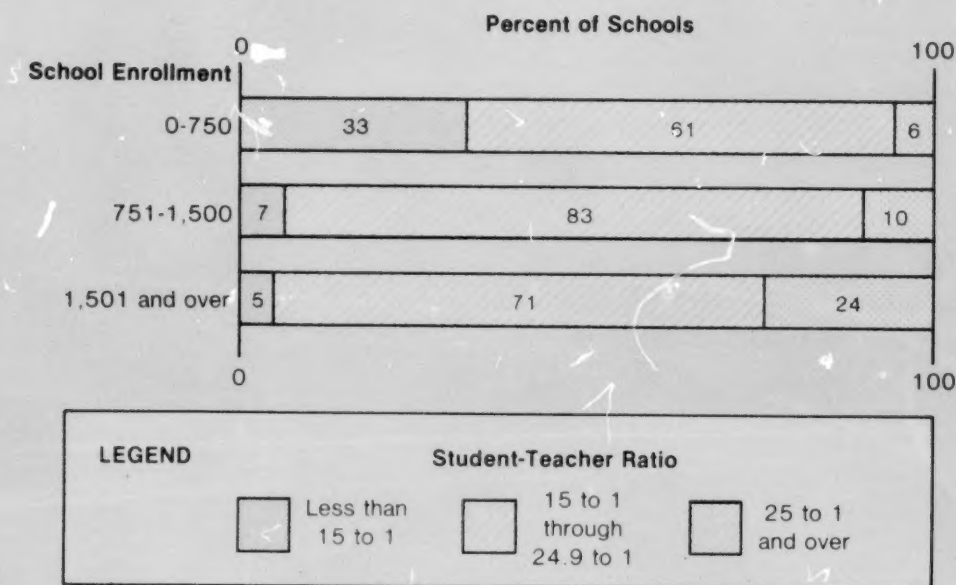
*"New" is used here to identify respondents who have been principals at their current schools for 1 year or less at the time they completed the questionnaire.

Figure 2
Enrollments of Participating Schools



Source: NIE/NASSP survey, item 1.

Figure 3
Ratio of Students to Teachers, by School Enrollment



Source: NIE/NASSP survey, items 1 and 58.

as an assistant administrator marks the professional course of most high school principals.

Principals, for the most part, have more than a college education. Nearly every principal has at least a master's degree in education; most have done graduate work beyond the master's degree, although only 8 percent have doctorates.

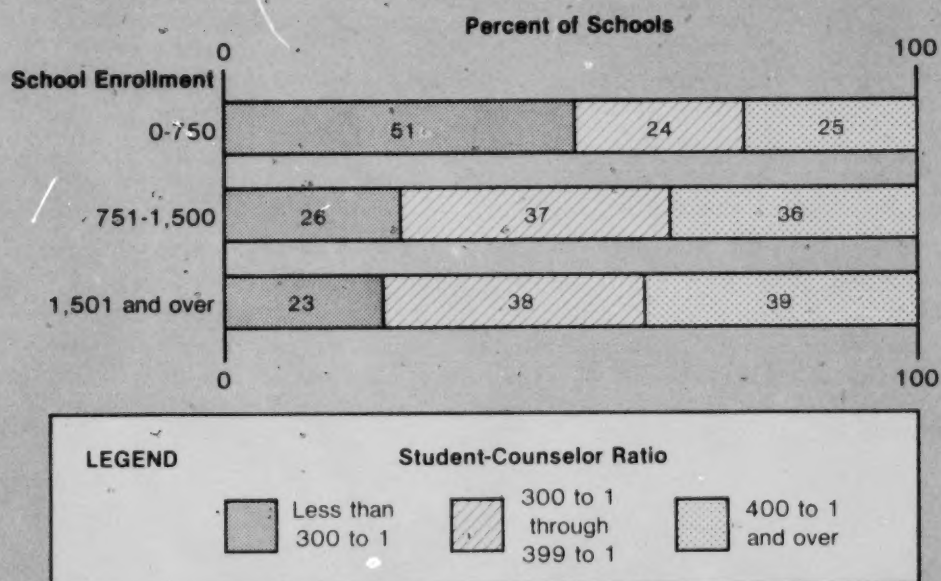
The average school employs 47 classroom teachers and seven other nonadministrative professionals—counselors, specialists, and librarians. The professional staff is fairly evenly composed of males and females. More than 90 percent of high school professionals are white, 6 percent are black, and 1 percent are Hispanic.

The average student-teacher ratio for our respondent schools is approximately 20 students per teacher. Figure 3 shows student-teacher ratios by school size. One-third of the smallest schools have student-teacher ratios of 15 to 1, perhaps because small schools, like their larger counterparts, have a core of specialized teachers to provide a minimum range of courses. The small number of students enrolled in such classes is likely to explain the low student-teacher ratio. More striking, however, is the large number of schools with the same student-teacher ratio (between 15.0 and 24.9) regardless of school size.

Taken as a whole, our respondent schools average 349 students for each guidance counselor. Again, larger schools tend to have higher ratios, as seen in figure 4. Those schools enjoying the most favorable student-counselor ratios are the small schools. One explanation for this result is that our survey provides reliable data only for the number of persons, not the number of full-time equivalents. Therefore, our data may overestimate the number of staff or of counselors in this instance, especially in small schools which are more likely to use part-time personnel.

In sum, the schools in our sample are representative of schools attended by students throughout the country. The average size of schools in our sample is 1,000. This suggests that the description the survey provides of high school programs, organization, and management will be most characteristic of schools that are neither overly large nor overly small.

Figure 4
Ratio of Students to Counselors, by School Enrollment



Source: NIE/NASSP survey, items 1 and 58.

3. *High School Programs: Comprehensive? Unbounded? Individuated?*

This chapter looks at how well high school programs meet student needs by examining the types of courses high schools offer. One purpose of this description is to determine to what degree course offerings are comprehensive, whether courses are given solely within the high school or extend into the community, and whether schools pay attention to individual needs or treat students uniformly. This chapter also compares our findings with James B. Conant's 1967 study of medium-sized schools to provide some perspective on how high schools have changed within the last 10 years.

How Comprehensive Are Programs?

Program comprehensiveness implies that courses are available for students of all educational interests, talents, and needs. Virtually all the high schools in our sample provide a standard academic curriculum, with courses in biology, chemistry, physics, and a mathematics sequence through grade 12 (item 15); they also require all students to take English through 11th grade (item 18). Almost every high school also offers the usual courses for non-college-bound students: business education, homemaking, wood or machine shop, and art (item 15). This basic core of courses appears relatively unchanged in the last 10 years, as shown by a comparison with Conant's 1967 study² of curriculum in 2,000 medium-sized comprehensive schools (enrollments of 750 to 1,999). For this comparison, we drew out the 688 schools of that size range in our sample and found the following:

- Calculus is more available today than 10 years ago: 68 percent of the current sample offer it, compared to 49 percent of Conant's sample in 1967.
- Foreign language studies are alive and well in today's medium-sized high schools. French is offered in 90 percent of the schools—the same percent-

age that offered it 10 years ago. Latin, taught in 38 percent of the schools in Conant's study, is still taught in 38 percent of our comparably sized schools.

- Vocational education, home economics, and auto mechanics were offered in most high schools 10 years ago; today such courses are universal.

Nationally, high schools have a considerable array of traditional and non-traditional courses. Several curriculum areas have, in fact, expanded since Conant's 1967 report and movements to modernize the high school curriculum have brought new courses into many schools (item 17). Of the questionnaire's eight selected nontraditional courses,* nearly all schools (92 percent) offer at least one, although few teach more than four. A typical high school offers two or three of the eight listed. For instance, more than three-fourths of the schools now teach sociology, anthropology, or psychology, and most offer courses in consumer education. Minority and women's studies, however, are taught in few high schools today.

While high school programs appear to provide a comprehensive curriculum, there has been a rapid shift of emphasis to the basics. Nearly four principals out of every five report increased stress over the past 5 years on teaching basic reading and math skills (item 47). This striking increase reflects the "back to basics" trend in response to parent and taxpayer dissatisfaction with rising school costs and falling test scores. At the same time, high schools continue to expand optional "enrichment" courses, electives, and nonclassroom credit alternatives. The tension between the two conflicting pressures makes course and curriculum planning more complicated. The situation is most likely aggravated by the budget squeezes many schools are experiencing.

Courses on or Off Campus

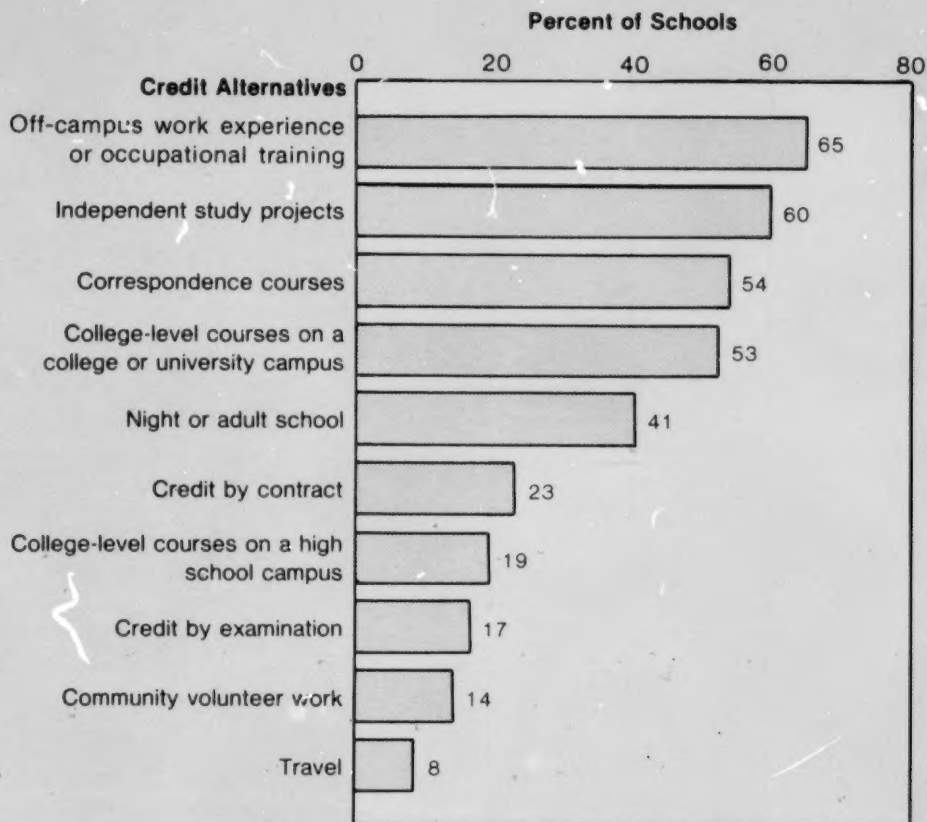
Results of this survey suggest that high schools are not insulated from their community. About two-thirds of all the schools responding now offer work experience or diversified off-campus occupational training programs (item 21). Among schools enrolling between 750 and 1,999 students, 73 percent provide such programs; this marks an increase for schools of this size of 35 percent from the time of Conant's study. In 1967, 54 percent of the schools sampled provided off-campus work experience. While the increase in 10 years is substantial, it is obvious that off-campus courses are not new.

In addition, independent study projects and college-level work on a college campus are available at most high schools today. Figure 5 shows the types of credit alternatives offered outside the conventional classroom and the percentages of schools offering them.

Nearly all schools (95 percent) offer at least one of the options listed; very few (10 percent) have more than five. The typical school curriculum contains three of the alternatives.

*Family life/sex education; values clarification; career exploration; ethnic studies; women's studies; consumer education; environmental or ocean studies; and sociology, anthropology, or psychology.

Figure 5
Credit Alternatives to Conventional Classroom Courses



Source: NIE/NASSP survey, item 21.

More credit options are offered in suburban schools than in their urban or rural counterparts.* Not surprisingly, larger schools feature more options. Regionally, schools in the West provide more options than do those elsewhere.

Although high schools offer their students many off-campus opportunities for earning credits, the number of students participating in off-campus pro-

*Locational and school site effects reported here and subsequently were ascertained through the use of multiple regression analysis, a statistical technique that examines the relationship between a dependent variable and a set of predictor variables. In this example, the number of credit options is the dependent variable. Through the multiple regression, one can examine the following questions: How does school size, or its metropolitan status, or its region, independently affect the likelihood that credit options will be offered? Results are reported only where significant effects were found.

grams is small. Principals in this survey report an average of only 9 percent of 11th graders and 16 percent of 12th graders engaged in programs or other activities off campus at least part of the day (item 22). However, four out of five schools report at least some 11th-grade students off campus, and 92 percent of the schools have at least some seniors off campus part of the time.

From our data, we have no way to ascertain the supply of, demand for, or access to any of these alternatives. For example, a school may offer a community volunteer program, but the program may not be able to accommodate all the students who apply. Few students may be interested in a given program. Or the paperwork involved in applying for a certain program may discourage students from participating.

These qualifications considered, high schools make available a considerable array of courses and credit options for students. The past 5 years have seen increases in the number of elective courses in almost two-thirds of the schools (item 47). Furthermore, 51 percent of the principals report that more credit alternatives are available today than 5 years ago.

In sum, our survey results suggest that high schools offer a variety of channels for meeting course and graduation requirements and are not insulated from their communities.

Serving Special Needs

In addition to various alternatives for meeting credit and graduation requirements, most schools provide services geared to diverse needs, according to their principals (item 23). For example, one-fifth of the schools have established a dropout prevention program. A job placement service helps students in 36 percent of the schools. About 65 percent of the schools permit early graduation, and 37 percent operate distinct alternative schools or alternative school programs. More Western schools offer early graduation arrangements than schools elsewhere. Large schools, and those in suburban areas, are more likely to permit early graduation than either urban, rural, or small-sized schools.

Program diversification occurs within classrooms, as well as at the school level. Critics claim that students are processed in large groups rather than by practices that recognize individual needs. To estimate roughly how well individual student learning needs are met at the classroom level, we asked principals about the presence of ability grouping (item 19), individualized learning, and remedial and bilingual instruction (item 23). The results appear in figure 6.

High schools appear to be responsive to individual educational needs. Among the five classroom-level programs that serve special needs of individuals, a strong majority of schools (71 percent) have one or two, and only 6 percent of the responding principals report having none. It must be noted, however, that these results only roughly estimate classroom practices; principals may not have complete information about what actually occurs within a given classroom. In addition, this survey inquired about only a sampling of practices that serve individual needs.

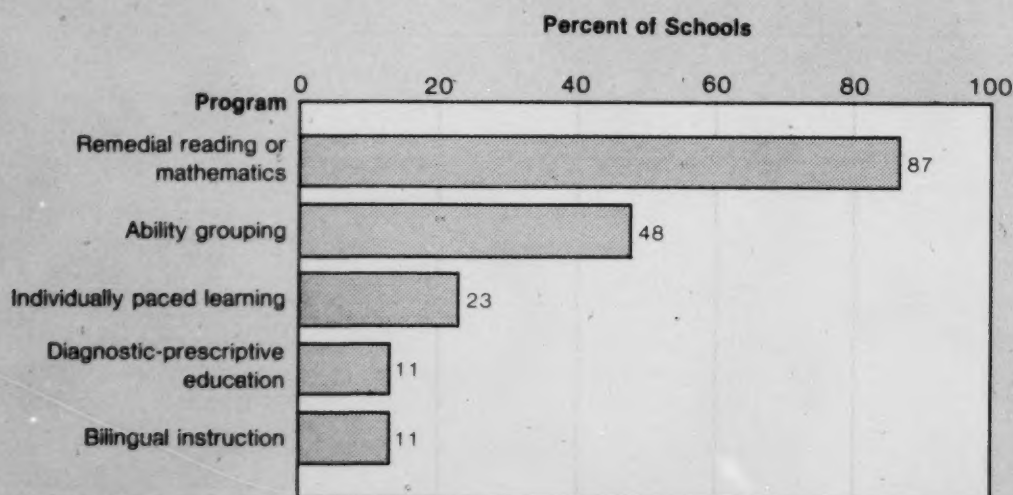
Most schools teach remedial basic skills; the principals' responses to a separate item indicate that 10 percent of their students are in remedial math and reading programs. Further examination shows more remedial work taking place in schools in the West and in larger schools.

More principals in the East and principals of large schools say their schools use ability grouping than smaller schools and schools in other regions. Taken as a whole, the principals' report of ability grouping represents a striking decrease from Conant's results 10 years ago. In his 1967 study, 97 percent of the principals reported using ability grouping, whereas only 59 percent of the principals in medium-sized schools in the current survey report its use. Possible explanations for the drop in reported ability grouping include some recent criticisms of its potential ill effect on students' self-image and rulings in some States that such tracking has a discriminatory effect and therefore is illegal.

Several parts of the survey tried to measure the degree to which students in the school could obtain remedial services, job-oriented services, or college-level work. To obtain a general indication of the extent to which schools serve a differentiated clientele, we grouped the indicators into three categories: college-oriented, job-related, and remedial. The results are shown in table 2.

The findings reveal that almost half of the schools have programs for all three groups of students, and nearly one-third serve two groups, usually the job-oriented students and those needing remedial work. About one-third of the

Figure 6
Programs That Meet Individual Needs



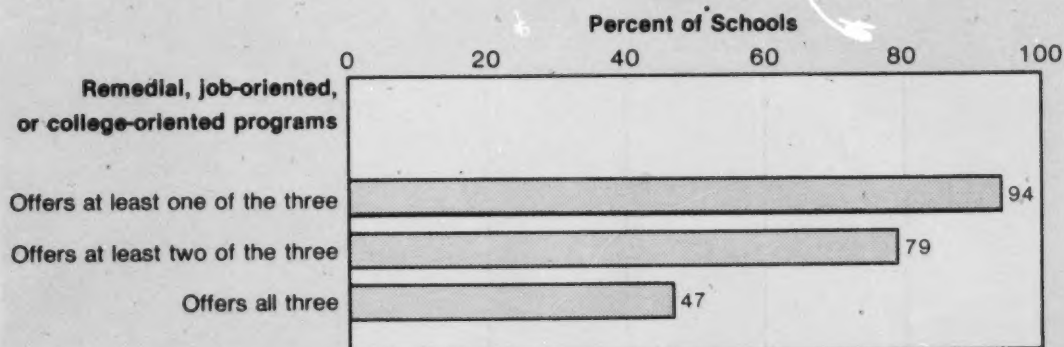
Source: NIE/NASSP survey, items 19 and 23.

schools have no college-level work programs; about one-fourth lack the job-oriented programs listed. In sum, the great majority of schools (79 percent) operate specific programs for at least two of the three groups. The results are summarized in figure 7.

Table 2. Schools Offering Special Services

Service	Percentage of Schools Offering Service
College oriented	
Advanced placement	40%
College-level courses on college campus	53
College-level course at high school	19
Job related	
Work experience or occupational training	65
Job placement	36
Remedial: at least some students taking remedial work in—	
English	76
Mathematics	68

**Figure 7
Three Types of Need-Based Programs**



Source: NIE/NASSP survey, items 21 and 23.

The extent to which high schools serve individual needs is also suggested by an indicator of the school's external environment—the variety of Federal or State funds received (item 12). Nearly all schools receive external funding for vocational education and special (handicapped) education. More than 69 percent are funded by Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA),* and 36 percent receive funds for career education. Nearly all schools have at least 3 of the 12 funding programs listed in item 12, and the average school receives funding from six sources.

Facilities. The variety of facilities a school has is another gauge of the degree to which the school is geared to meet a wide range of individual needs. Item 10 in the questionnaire asked about such facilities as an indoor lounge or commons for students, a career information center, and a remedial reading or math lab. Eighty percent of the schools have a career information center, two-thirds have areas set aside for remedial work, and almost half have media production facilities either on campus or nearby.

In general, not counting the student cafeteria, nearly every respondent school (95 percent) has at least 1 of the 10 facilities listed on the questionnaire; the majority of schools (58 percent) have 4 or more. Larger schools are far more likely to have more facilities.

Statistical correlations indicate that schools with more credit and course alternatives also have a greater variety of specialized facilities, suggesting that schools offering nonclassroom alternatives have space to house them.

Program Management. Another way of examining the extent to which a high school program accommodates individual needs or treats students uniformly is to examine how students are scheduled and graded. According to the principals sampled (items 4 and 5), nearly all school systems organize their year around the conventional semester system (87 percent) and their day around the traditional 35- to 60-minute period (95 percent). The only nontraditional scheduling alternatives used to a significant extent are minicourses and block scheduling (periods lasting 2 hours or more).

Although some schools have implemented one or more nontraditional grading methods, letter grades are still the most widely used method to report student progress (item 25). About half of the schools use only the traditional grading system of A-B-C-D-F or numerical or percentage-based grades. The others use both traditional and alternative methods. Nearly all schools using pass-fail or pass-withdraw (36 percent of all schools surveyed) maintain these methods in conjunction with a traditional system.

Less conventional methods of organizing high schools do not appear to be common. Dividing the school into subunits is not a widely used method of organization. Open-space classrooms are uncommon, with only one high school in four having facilities for open-space or flexible-wall arrangements. In

*A recent study of Title 1 ESEA indicates that only 5 percent of all Title 1 funds go to secondary schools. While more than 69 percent of the schools in our sample report having access to these funds, it is obvious that the level of funding in any individual high school is relatively small. National Institute of Education. *Compensatory Education Services* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, July 1977).

the majority of schools that do have them, less than 10 percent of the teachers work in open-space settings.

It appears, then, that the scheduling and grading systems in the Nation's high schools still are geared to processing large numbers of students easily. Although there has been some movement on the curricular side to increase diversity in course offerings, high school management of programs is traditional and generally unchanged since the beginning of the century.

Charts 1 and 2 document some of the major programmatic and managerial features of the high schools in this study.

The Graduates

We have seen that high school students can choose among diverse programs and a rather comprehensive curriculum. The question remains as to how well students perform in the eyes of principals.

Respondents report that student achievement is not as high as principals would like, but their reports of other results of schooling are far more encouraging. For example, principals in this survey report on average, only a 6 percent dropout rate for the class of 1977 (item 51). In 71 percent of the schools sampled, the dropout rate was reported as 5 percent or less. These reported estimates are much lower than the national average. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the national percentage of high school students of graduating age in 1975 who quit before receiving a diploma fell to about 25 percent—down from 35 percent in 1960 and 41 percent in 1950. Since 1964, the overall dropout rate seems to have stabilized at about 25 percent, despite major dropout prevention efforts by schools since the mid-sixties.³

There are a few possible explanations for the discrepancies between data from this survey and those of NCES. NCES graduation rates exclude students who earn diploma equivalents and students who graduate from programs other than regular daytime programs. Inclusion of students using these alternatives in NCES data would have reduced the 1975 dropout rate by 5 percent, down to 20 percent. Second, our sample excludes vocational and continuation high schools. Thus, dropout rates from these types of schools are not included; nor are the rates of leaving regular high school to enter a vocational-technical or continuation school. The noteworthy point remains that the principals of the high schools in our sample report a minimal dropout problem.

The principals report that only 7 percent of the class of 1977 graduated early (item 51), although 66 percent of the high schools surveyed give students this option. This 7 percent figure appears representative of recent national trends. As of 1974, the nationwide proportion of students graduating from high school early was 8 percent, up from about 2 percent in 1970.⁴ Principals presumably see the low dropout rates and the low rate of early exit as evidence of the power of the high school to "hold" students until normal graduation time.

Principals also were asked to estimate what they thought students of the class of 1976 did immediately after graduation (item 50). They reported that

Chart 1. Features Most Schools Have

At Least 85 Percent of Schools	At Least 75 Percent of Schools	At Least 67 Percent of Schools
Traditional 35- to 60-minute periods	Career information center	Remedial reading or mathematics laboratories
Free or reduced price lunch funding	Vocational education funding; Special education funding	ESEA Title I funding; Transportation funding
Biology, chemistry, physics; Business education, home-making, art, wood or machine shop; Sequential mathematics through grade 12; Full year of English required for all 10th and 11th graders	Sociology, anthropology, or psychology	French
	At least some 12th graders in off-campus programs part of the school week	At least 6 percent of all 12th graders and at least some 11th graders in off-campus programs part of the school week
	10 to 25 percent of 11th and 12th graders in some extracurricular activity	At least 25 percent of 11th and 12th graders in some extracurricular activity
	A-B-C-D-F grading system	

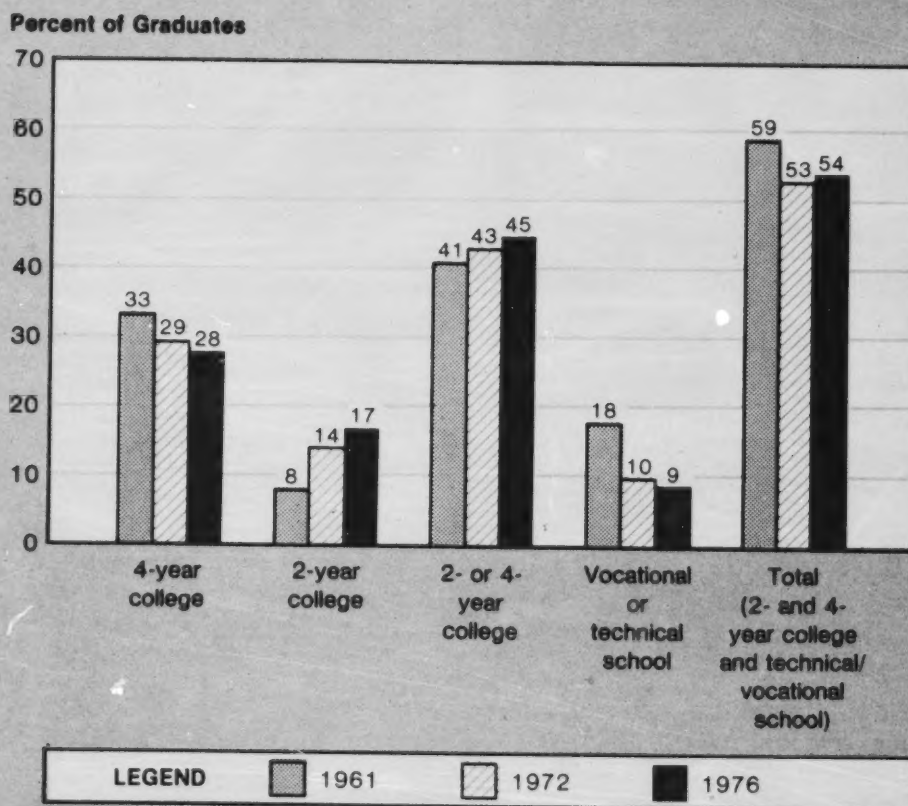
Chart 2. Features Few Schools Have

Fewer Than 15 Percent of Schools	Fewer Than 25 Percent of Schools	Fewer Than 33 Percent of Schools
Minicourses; Trimester system; Year-round schedule; Modules (10 to 30 minutes) Flexible or daily demand scheduling	Quarter system; Subunits or subschools; Block or departmental scheduling (2-hour periods or longer)	
	Voluntary summer school	
Childcare facility on campus	Occupational training center on campus	Instruction in flexible, open-space areas
Bilingual education funding; Funding for assistance to Indo- chinese refugee children; ESEA (desegregation) funding	State compensatory education funding	
Russian; Women's studies; Values clarification, moral education	Ethnic studies	Latin Environmental studies
Credit for travel experience; Credit from community volunteering	Credit by examination Credit by contract	
Diagnostic prescriptive education (DPE); Bilingual program	College-level courses given at high school; Early exit by examination (for diploma or equivalent); Individually paced learning; Dropout prevention program	
Pass-withdraw; Self-evaluation verification of competency; Weighted grading; Conferences	Numerical grading	

slightly more than 50 percent of their high school seniors attended postsecondary institutions; 38 percent sought work full time; and 6 percent entered the armed forces.

The estimates of students going on for higher education are close to trends reported elsewhere (see figure 8). A comparison with two other major national studies, the first dated 1961, indicates a slight drop in attendance at 4-year colleges, a marked decline in vocational-technical school enrollment, and a near doubling in the number of high school graduates enrolling in 2-year colleges.⁵

Figure 8
Percent of High School Graduates Immediately Entering
Postsecondary Institutions, 1961-76



Source: NIE/NASSP survey, item 50, and S.S. Peng, "Trends in the Entry to Higher Education: 1961-1972," *Educational Researcher*, January 1977.

Conclusion

Traditional managerial arrangements still prevail in American high schools—particularly the conventional semester system, a set daily schedule, and traditional letter grading. However, within this framework, high schools provide a considerable and widening array of courses, services, and credit options for students. While providing a comprehensive curriculum within, the typical high school also gives students some off-campus learning opportunities. The emerging view of high school programs shows considerable diversity within fairly limited managerial bounds.

These results warrant a certain caveat. While it is clear that schools offer many alternatives, it does not automatically follow that students have many choices. Furthermore, program diversity may reflect Federal mandates or funding opportunities rather than a desire to meet student needs. Further inquiry at the student and teacher level is planned to address these issues.

NOTES

1. Panel on Youth, *op. cit.*; National Panel on High School and Adolescent Education, *op. cit.*; National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education, *op. cit.*
2. James B. Conant, *The Comprehensive High School*, *op. cit.*
3. National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Educational Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 65.
4. Educational Research Service, *Early Graduation from High School: Policy and Practice* (Arlington, Va.: Educational Research Service Report, 1975).
5. S.S. Peng, "Trends in the Entry to High Education: 1961-1972," *Educational Researcher*, January 1977.

4. *How Bureaucratic Are High Schools?*

A common criticism of high schools is that they cannot address student needs because they are bureaucracies, marked by red tape, excessive rules and regulations, authoritarian teachers, and alienated students. While assessing all of these claims was beyond the scope of the survey of principals,* we did examine the degree to which the high school is a bureaucracy in the classical sense of the term.¹ Specifically, we looked at school structure and coordination mechanisms.

Components central to school structure include the complexity of a school's staffing patterns, the roles a principal emphasizes, and the diversity of individuals involved in school decisionmaking. A principal who focused on managerial issues, decisionmaking centralized in the office of the principal, and a broad cast of specialists are some of the characteristics that would be found in a bureaucratic high school.

Coordination mechanisms refer to leadership attempts to orchestrate staff and student activity through rules, meetings, or individual evaluations. A large number of rules, especially regulating teacher instructional activity, and frequent formal staff evaluations are the sort of control mechanisms one expects to find in a bureaucratically organized high school.

STRUCTURE

The Principal's Role

High school principals wear many hats. Important concerns from both within and outside the school compete for their time. This was determined by investigating the extent to which principals see themselves as managers, as senior colleagues to teachers, or as "goodwill ambassadors" to the community. The first

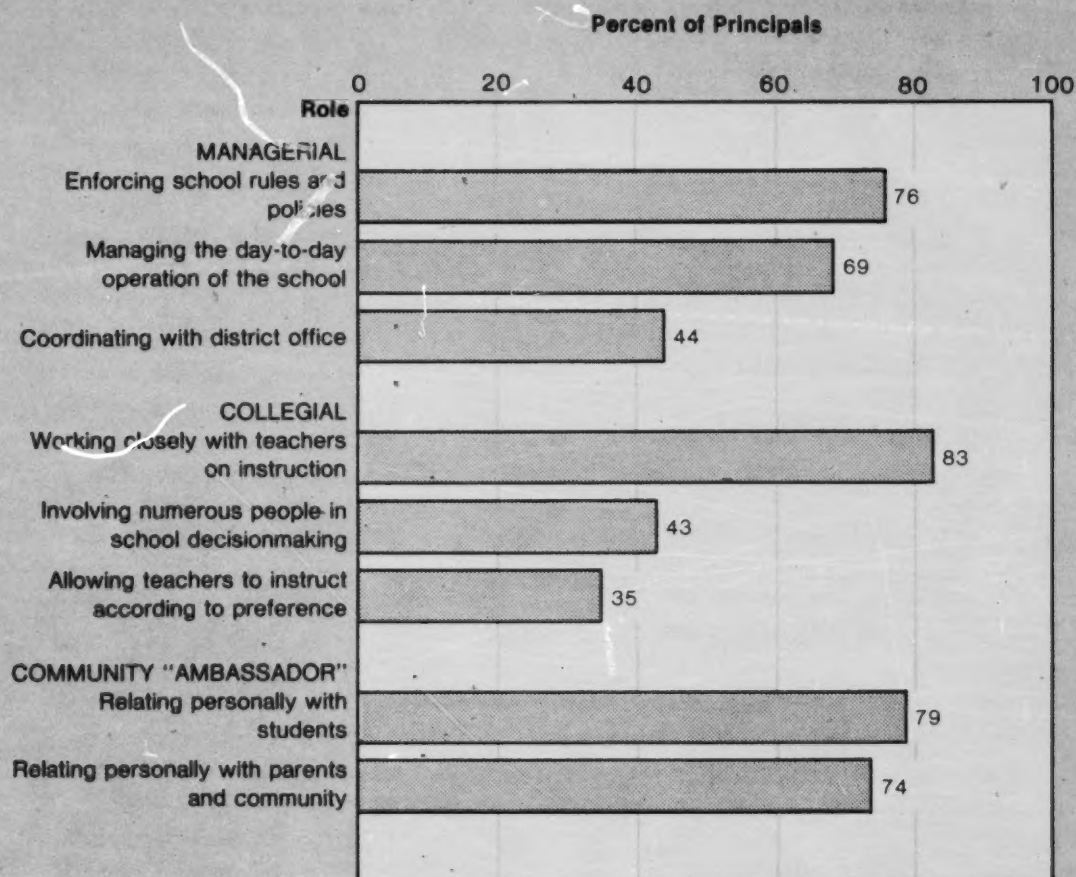
*The future work planned with teachers and counselors, as well as the case studies, will attempt to examine how bureaucratic schools are from the points of view of actors other than the principal.

suggests a more bureaucratic perception, the second a more professional one, and the third, a public relations function.

The survey also examined the breadth of the principal's role, because some principals may perceive all three to be equally important. Figure 9 categorizes principals' responses to item 66 according to the three general role categories.

More than three-fourths of the principals report that at least one responsibility in each role category is very important. Apparently, it would be misleading to say that principals see one role as more critical than another. Yet actual observation of principals' behavior would be required to determine whether

Figure 9
Individual Roles Principals Consider Very Important



Source: NIE/NAESP survey, item 66.

these responses indicate what principals consider to be socially desirable, or what they really do.

The variety of principals' concerns is even more striking when we note how many of the eight separate responsibilities each principal considers central; 64 percent believe at least five of the eight roles are very important.

Staffing Patterns

Staffing patterns in an organization can be examined both horizontally and vertically. One looks horizontally at the school's division of labor for the presence of teachers, counselors, librarians, psychologists, and other specialists — members of similar professional status performing different tasks. One also looks at the number of discrete subject-area departments; schools with many departments and many kinds of professionals are more complex. One looks vertically at the hierarchy of authority to see to what extent teachers, department heads, assistant principals, and the principal form the proverbial organizational ladder. Our high school survey primarily analyzed horizontal staffing patterns.*

The average high school has two assistant principals, two guidance counselors, 47 teachers, two specialists (special education teachers, resource teachers, media specialists, psychologists, and others), and one librarian (item 58). In addition, 43 percent of the schools employ teacher aides, and 53 percent have practice teachers. Less than one-fifth of the high schools use volunteers.

Horizontal staffing patterns of high schools generally are simpler and less differentiated than one expects in a bureaucratic organization. (See figure 10.) For example, 60 percent of the schools have fewer than two assistant principals, 45 percent have fewer than two specialists and counselors, and 40 percent have fewer than nine subject-matter departments. In fact, only 17 percent of the schools have 13 or more departments and only 10 percent have four or more assistant principals. Thus, for the great majority of schools staffing patterns are relatively simple.

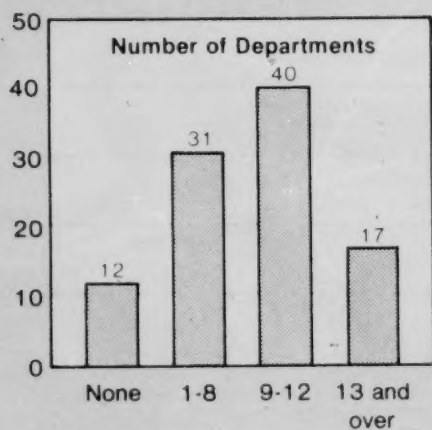
Nonetheless, high schools today appear considerably more complex in their staffing patterns than they were in the sixties. A majority of principals (53 percent) report that the number of specialists in their schools has increased over the past 5 years; 39 percent report an overall increase in the number of staff members.

The relatively simple patterns we find tend to reflect school size: The average school surveyed has 956 students (item 1); one-third of the schools have fewer than 570 students. Only 19 percent of the schools are large organizations with 1,500 or more students. The few large schools participating in the survey tend to have the most complex staffing patterns.

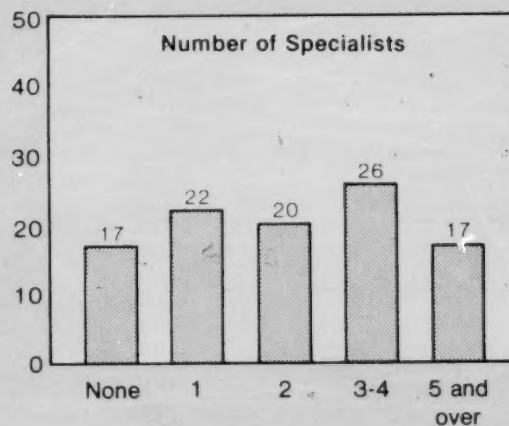
*Item 37 attempted to capture the presence of a hierarchy of authority, but respondent problems with the question resulted in uninterpretable data.

Figure 10
Staff Differentiation

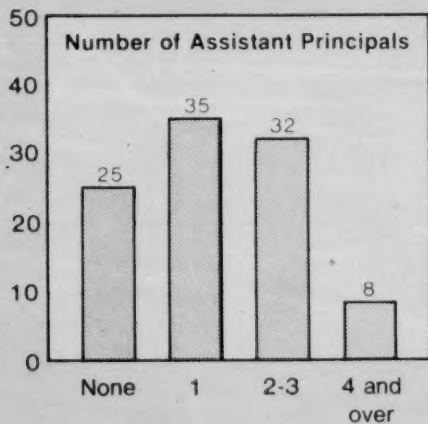
**Percent of
Schools**



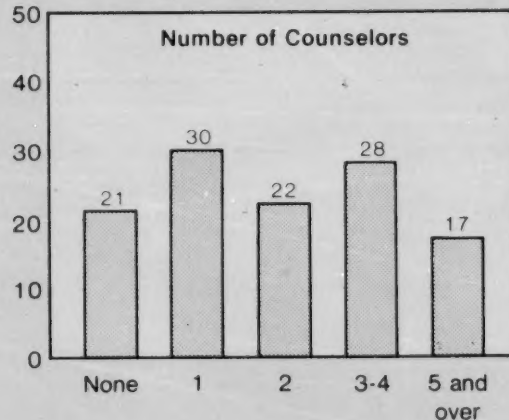
**Percent of
Schools**



**Percent of
Schools**



**Percent of
Schools**



Source: NIE/NASSP survey, item 3 and 58.

Involvement in Decisionmaking

How broad based is decisionmaking participation in high schools? Generally, the process is considered "centralized" if the principal makes most decisions with relatively little participation by various individuals and groups within the school.

We estimated the breadth of decisionmaking participation (item 40) by listing certain important issues on which decisions must be made and by counting the number of issues in which the principal reports that certain types of people become involved. The issues examined were the following:

- teacher selection
- adding a new academic course
- adopting rules for student behavior
- determining course objectives
- evaluating the school's grading practices
- formulating school goals
- developing a school budget

The types of people who might become involved in decisionmaking are as follows:

Clients

- student groups
- students as individuals
- parents or community groups

District officials

- school board
- superintendent
- central office administrators

Staff

- assistant administrators, deans
- guidance counselors
- teachers
- department heads
- teacher unions
- school policy or planning group

The most involved participant is definitely the school principal, who is involved in every issue examined. A principal's extensive involvement, however, does not preclude participation by others. Within the school, organization members participate in matters related to their expertise. Second only to the principal in extent of involvement are teachers, who, on average, take part in four of the seven issues. They are least involved in budgeting (32 percent) and in teacher selection (7 percent). Next most involved are assistant principals or deans, who partake in an average of three of the seven issues. They are most involved with rules for student behavior (51 percent) and with overall school goals (48 percent). Counselors are most involved in evaluating grading practices (48 percent), deciding on the addition of new courses (43 percent), and formulating general goals for the school (46 percent). They are not usually involved in other matters. Despite the growth of unions, principals report that teacher organizations as a distinct group rarely participate in decisions on any of the issues presented. However, a union's presence may lead to participation of teachers in making decisions in key areas.

Among the clients, parents participate slightly more than students on most issues. But generally, significant participation by clients occurs in only a small minority of schools and usually centers on adopting rules for student behavior.

Aside from the principal, those most consistently involved in schoolwide matters appear to be district-level officials, especially the superintendent and school board members. On every issue listed, both the superintendent and the school board participate in making decisions in the majority of schools.

According to the principals, the number of people involved in school decisionmaking has increased over the past several years; 62 percent of the principals report such an increase. To some extent this rise simply parallels the growth in the overall number of specialists and school staff members. It is also possible that the trend in the late sixties toward leadership training for principals on such topics as "Organizational Development," along with community pressures for broader involvement, have contributed to this increase.

How Much Authority Does the Principal Have?

High school principals report having significant authority to run their schools. They face little central office interference with their leadership of the school—despite the consistent involvement of district officials, especially the superintendent, in decisionmaking concerning school matters. The data suggest that the superintendent's involvement may be more pro forma than substantive. In 73 percent of the schools, the superintendent is "usually involved" in teacher selection decisions for the principal's school; often the school board is also involved (item 40). Yet a majority of principals (56 percent) select their own teachers (item 44), with only a confirmation or endorsement by the central office (item 44).*

As another example, 41 percent of the principals have complete authority to make budget allocations within their schools (item 41). Another 33 percent have considerable authority to do so. In this matter, the superintendent also participates in 76 percent of the cases, and the school board in 60 percent. In matters that deal only with a school's internal operations, the principal generally has major authority, despite involvement by school district officials.

In matters concerning district funding, the principal's authority is slightly more limited. Only 43 percent of the school heads sampled say they have extensive or considerable authority to make decisions concerning the district's budget allocations to their schools (item 43). On the other hand, 65 percent of the principals have complete or considerable authority to choose between hiring one full-time teacher or two aides.

Just as staff members within the school participate primarily in matters concerning their bailiwick, principals have authority within the school district mainly over matters of direct concern to them and their particular school.

*This finding is similar to that of the senior high school principalship study conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. NASSP reported that 51 percent of the principals have unrestricted authority to select teachers. David R. Byrnes, et al., *The Senior High School Principalship: Volume I, The National Survey* (Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1978), p. 24.

Given this perspective, there do not appear to be serious problems of authority between principals and the central office. Indeed, four-fifths of the principals report that conflict rarely if ever occurs (item 46), and that they are satisfied with their schools' relationship with the central office (item 69).

COORDINATION MECHANISMS

Rules

Those who maintain that schools regulate student and teacher activities through the use of rules will find some support in the survey results, especially as far as students are concerned (item 36).^{*} Two-thirds or more of the schools have rules governing student dress and other activities. Teachers appear to be less subject to rules than students. Rules relating to noninstructional matters, such as the handling of disruptive students and parent complaints, are fairly common for teachers. But rules seem to be used much less frequently to control teachers' professional activities within the classroom. Almost three-fourths of the principals report a rule governing visits by outside guest speakers, but less than half the schools have a rule prescribing amounts of homework.

A school with rules in one area may not have rules in other areas, although statistical correlations of our survey data showed that schools that rely heavily on student rules also tend to use rules for teacher behavior. These same schools do not necessarily set rules governing larger academic and management issues such as how school budgets will be allocated or what graduation requirements the school might establish (item 35). Table 3 shows what percentage of respondent schools set rules for students, teachers, and general school management.

Meetings

This coordination mechanism is more personal than reliance on rules. An elaborate and broad-based network of meetings can indicate complexity of coordination.

Our data indicate frequent use of meetings within high schools (item 28). Principals' meetings with administrative staff are clearly the most frequent—at least once a week in 41 percent of the schools. More than one-third of the schools hold general faculty meetings more than once a month; half of the schools hold them monthly. Departmental meetings and meetings with parents (such as PTA or advisory groups) usually occur every month or several times a year. In addition, two-thirds of the principals have an advisory group that meets regularly (monthly or several times a year) to deal with matters of school policy and planning. Such groups typically include assistant principals, teachers, students, and parents.

The principal's sphere of interest extends beyond the school to participation in districtwide meetings—with, among others, the superintendent, central office budget and curriculum specialists, and other principals (item 27). The most

^{*}This survey item attempted to examine not only the presence of selected rules, but also their level of enforcement. Many of the principals did not answer the enforcement part of the question; hence those data cannot be interpreted.

frequent meetings at this level involve the principal and superintendent, who meet at least once a week in 41 percent of the cases, and two or three times a month for another 25 percent.

Nearly half our responding principals meet with curriculum specialists—at least once a month for 40 percent of the principals; 36 percent meet separately with district budget officials at least monthly. Almost 75 percent of the principals meet with heads of other schools at least once a month. In short, meetings are common in high schools, and principals spend a good deal of time in them, both in and outside of the school.

Table 3. School Rules Pertaining to Students Teachers, and General Management Issues

	Percent of Schools with Formal Rules
Rules Affecting Students	
Responsibility for school property damage	99%
No smoking	91
Hall passes	83
Closed campus for lunch	64
Dress codes	65
Rules Affecting Teachers	
<i>Noninstructional</i>	
Disruptive students in class	93
Parental complaints	77
<i>Instructional</i>	
Outside speakers in class	74
Testing frequency (weekly, midterms, finals, etc.)	52
Amount of homework given students	40
School Management Rules	
Determination of course objectives	82
Institution of rules for student behavior	76
Allocation of school budget funds among departments, teachers, or activities	68
Adoption of a new grading practice	61
Setting conditions for early exit/early graduation	52
Adoption of a new academic course	59
Setting criteria for evaluating teacher performance	49
Setting criteria for evaluating principal performance	26

Source: NIE/NASSP survey, items 35 and 36.

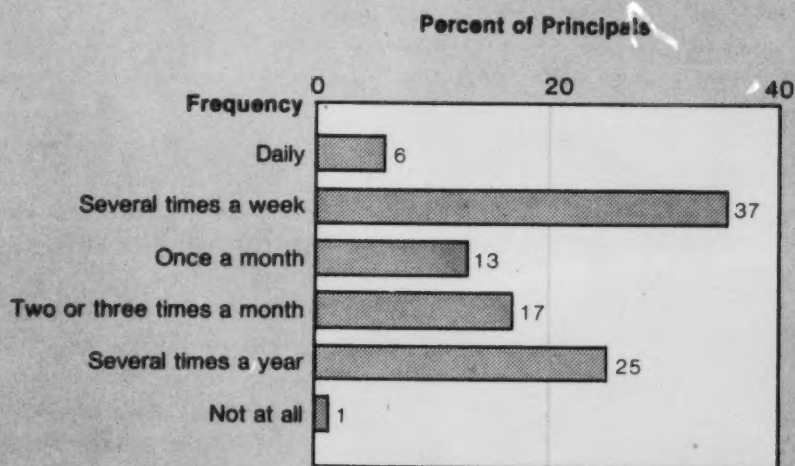
Evaluation

Perhaps the most personal coordination mechanism is individual evaluation of professional staff members. There is likely to be a big difference between schools where teachers remain relatively isolated in their classrooms and are evaluated infrequently or irregularly and schools where evaluation is used regularly. In the former, the school organization probably has little effect on teacher behavior or classroom activity. To estimate how extensively evaluation mechanisms are employed in the school, we used the frequency of and breadth of participation in formal teacher evaluation (items 30 and 31) and the frequency of formal teacher observation by the principal (item 32).

Teachers in most schools are evaluated formally at least once a year, either by the principal alone (in one-third of the schools) or by the principal and an assistant administrator. Administrators evaluate teachers to a much greater extent than do other professionals; department heads participate in the evaluation in only about one-fourth of the schools. Teachers perform self-evaluations in one out of four cases. Teacher evaluations by peers and students are rare.

Principals were asked how often they observe in classrooms, on average (items 32). As shown in figure 11, respondents fall into two main groups: those who visit at least several times a week and those who visit a few times a month or less frequently. However, the lack of specificity in the question means that we cannot distinguish between principals who observe classrooms frequently but who see any one teacher infrequently.

Figure 11
Frequency of Classroom Observation



Source: NIE/NASSP survey, item 32.

In sum, the high school principals in our survey tend to coordinate staff activities through both formal and informal mechanisms. Most principals surveyed report using rules to govern student and teacher non-instructional behavior as well as to manage the school generally; they also use meetings and informal classroom visits.

Conclusion

If high schools could be characterized as bureaucratic, the variables we examined would have been found extensively in high schools. For example, we would find extensive specialization and a great deal of coordination through formal means such as rules, especially regarding teacher instructional behavior, and frequent formal evaluations.

However, our results suggest that structure and coordination are manifested differently from their operation in a bureaucracy. School structure is not as extensive as in a bureaucracy. The level of differentiation among staff members is modest; the principal's role is many-faceted rather than primarily managerial; decisionmaking is participatory and decentralized.

As far as coordination is concerned, the results are less clear-cut. A bureaucracy relies heavily on consistently enforced rules to govern participant behavior. In today's high schools rules do govern student and teacher noninstructional activities. However, fewer rules touch the professional aspects of instruction. Among the other coordination mechanisms, personal and informal practices (such as meetings and classroom visits by the principal) are used more often than formal evaluation.

The results suggest that both structure and coordination exist in high schools, but function in quite a different fashion from that usually seen in a bureaucracy. Structure in a bureaucratic system is noticeable and controlling; in the schools we surveyed, structure seems to exhibit (rather than exercise) control. Principals who display an interest in all aspects of school life—and who are open to staff and client involvement—may rely more on ritual and the authority inherent in their office rather than on direct control and supervision to accomplish what needs to be done.

Similarly, the lack of much coordination or control over instruction-related activities is to be expected, if the administrative apparatus is substantially unconnected to the technical instructional core. Coordination, when it does exist, is manifested through less formal mechanisms, such as holding meetings and observing teachers informally.

The lack of findings supporting traditional bureaucratic notions of high school organization may be partially explained by certain limitations of the research. First, we could have asked the wrong questions of the wrong people. To a considerable extent this is a limitation inherent in a broad first survey. While we have been unable to uncover bureaucracy as reported by principals, we may find more evidence of it when we ask counselors and teachers to describe school structure and management.

Another problem has to do with the static nature of our study. We have no idea whether these results would differ were we to investigate the school's

response to change over time or its response to environmental uncertainty. As an example, in fairly uneventful times, a school may consist of a series of loosely connected subsystems. During times of adversity, however, components may become more tightly connected. This problem could only be untangled through longitudinal research.

In conclusion, our initial findings indicate that "bureaucracy" may not be the most accurate description of the high school as an organization. Because high schools appear to lack the characteristics that bureaucracies are supposed to have, the diagnosis of how high schools fail to meet the needs of students should be reassessed. Additional results discussed in the next chapter suggest that another model may be more appropriate in explaining high school organization and management.

NOTES

1. Traditional theory stems from the work of Max Weber. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, trans.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958) and *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, trans.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947). Bureaucratic theory as it applies to schools is discussed in J. G. Anderson, *Bureaucracy in Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968).

5. *Another View of School Structure**

We have seen that a conventionally bureaucratic diagram does not accurately fit the patterns of structure and coordination mechanisms found in contemporary high schools. More recent sociological literature presents another view of school organization which seems to fit the evidence somewhat more closely.¹

Structure and coordination, according to supporters of the newer theories, serve very important functions in schools. Their purposes may be rather different from their apparent functions, however. Proponents suggest that one purpose of structure is to justify a school in the eyes of its community and of the agencies supporting it. Thus, convening meetings and making resolutions are important rituals in and of themselves. Such rituals solidify community trust in the school and reinforce the good faith of school staff members in their own work as educators. The presence of certain specialists on the school staff, for another example, gives the school a more professional and legitimate image, entirely apart from whatever substantive services these individuals might render.

If there is a widespread belief that the academic achievement of school children should be assessed, then schools employ a school psychologist or counselor and establish regular testing procedures—even though the test results may never be used to improve or evaluate the performance of individual teachers or schools.² In this manner, community approval is established and maintained.

If actual outcomes in the school fall short of public expectations when activities in the school are monitored, the standing of the school can be questioned. But making the appropriate formal, structural response (hiring specialists, giving tests) can be action enough to alleviate the fears and allay the criticisms of the general public. In this way, schools can respond to a broad

*This chapter was written by E. Anne Stackhouse, Department of Sociology, Stanford University.

variety of somewhat inconsistent demands from different parts of their environment. This sort of response helps to insure financial support and maintain the good faith of the community toward the school.

To maintain this public good faith, no matter what a school does, or how, it must look like a "real school"—with a principal, teachers in classrooms, books, and exams. Other components demanded by the individual school's constituencies can then be added to these core features.³ Such issues of public legitimacy weigh heavily on schools. Hence, schools frequently must seem to be bureaucracies—at least to their communities. But schools are expected to do many things in addition to teaching students basic language and mathematical skills, and there is disagreement about the relative importance of the differing aims.⁴ For example, students, teachers, taxpayers, and board of education members may expect schools to achieve racial integration; reduce inequities in achievement between the sexes and among ethnic groups; integrate the handicapped into the mainstream of society; produce socially competent, esthetically aware, moral, and patriotic citizens equipped to move into the world of work or college; and produce academic excellence in its graduates. Yet schools are in a situation where resources are limited and pressures for accountability are increasing.

Thus, although school policies that avoid direct control and coordination seem inefficient at first blush, these new theorists suggest an interesting twist: The looseness affords a vitality, an organizational flexibility, that allows schools to better serve the changing needs of their diverse clientele.⁵ Maintaining the good faith of their constituencies is especially crucial to schools because of the extent to which they rely for support both on public agencies and on their local communities.

HOW SCHOOLS ADAPT: THE "LOOSE-COUPLING" THEORY

The recent body of literature about educational organizations suggests that schools adapt to these community pressures by maintaining two rather loosely interconnected systems. According to these theories, one subsystem of the school—the structure—is formal, but often ritualistic in character because of its lack of influence over coordination within the school. Because of these hypothesized relationships between structure and coordination, these theories are sometimes called "loose-coupling" theories.

What might structural features and coordination mechanisms in schools look like according to these newer theories? One would expect that, although specialists would be added to a school staff in response to environmental beliefs and pressures, there would be more emphasis on the key roles of teachers and principals than on increasing the specialization of each staff member. One can speculate that a school could satisfy external demands for staff to perform particular roles if the district were to hire people who could be loaned to each of several schools for a few hours per week or who could be available at the district office as consultants to local schools.

The roles of individual principals would be broad, rather than specialized. Principals would have to serve as managers in response to State, district, and

Federal agency requirements; as ambassadors to parents and students; and as colleagues to their fellow professionals.

As far as involvement in decisionmaking is concerned, one would expect fairly broad formal participation, with members of each constituency involved in some decisions. Issues relating to overall school goals should, for example, enjoy especially broad involvement. Principals, as symbolic leaders of their organizations, would have to participate in virtually all types of decisions. The ritual of deciding on a general goal or set of goals reflecting public concerns may go a long way toward insuring good will, even though the consensus may not really affect or influence everyday activity in the school.

One would expect fairly broad, general rules governing student and teacher behavior, especially where the student or teacher would probably have contact with members of the public. But one would also expect fewer rules regarding instructional practices. For example, rules governing teacher behavior toward disruptive students or in response to parental complaints would probably be more common than those governing homework and test frequency. Frequency of rules concerning the admission of the public into the classroom (as outside speakers, for instance) would fall somewhere between the other two categories.

Loose-coupling theorists would expect a broad variety of meetings in which different actors within the school and from the local community and district office participate. These formal meetings might be infrequent and organized around regular rituals such as musical performances and annual pageants at the parent-teacher meetings. This active participation of school and community members would lead to a collective reaffirmation of faith in the school.

One would expect performance evaluations to be formalized and infrequent. Observation of teachers at work in their individual classrooms would be infrequent, because the legitimacy of the school is protected if discrepancies between its (often mutually contradictory) objectives and what goes on in the classroom are not uncovered.

ARE SCHOOLS LOOSELY COUPLED?

Generally, the data from this survey seem to fit this alternative picture fairly well. For example, the average school has 47 teachers, yet most principals observe in a classroom once a week or less. One can extrapolate that the principal observes the typical teacher while teaching only once a year or so. Also teachers are formally evaluated only about once a year. It seems fairly clear that this frequency does not represent close supervision of the central work of the school—the teaching of students.

However, there is no set standard against which one can measure the extent of specialization or the frequency of supervision, so this sort of comparison of actual schools to either ideal picture—bureaucracy or loose coupling—is at best imprecise. A comparison of the accuracy of the two models is important, however, because each theory suggests rather different courses of action by policymakers and the two theories predict different sets of results.⁸ The com-

parison can be made by examining the relationships between structural features and coordination mechanisms in schools and by noting the effects of environmental and programmatic pressures on the patterns of structure and coordination. Differences in the two theories are shown in chart 3.

Bureaucratic vs. Loose-Coupling Theory: Structure

Traditional bureaucratic theory maintains that structure directly affects the activities and attitudes of individuals working in an organization.⁷ Furthermore, the complexity of structural features is thought to directly determine the extensiveness of the coordination mechanisms used in an organization. For example, a bureaucratic perspective would predict that a school with a large, complex, and highly specialized staff would require more coordination of employees and would rely heavily on rules, meetings, or personal evaluations to accomplish this coordination.

This perspective also predicts that schools located in a problematic environment and those with complex programs or management systems would require more coordination to deal with these issues. For instance, in a school with a decreasing budget, one would expect to find tighter controls both on staff and

Chart 3. Bureaucratic Versus Loose-Coupling Theory

Bureaucratic Theory	Loose Coupling Theory
Narrow principal role	Broad principal role
Centralized decisionmaking	Decentralized decisionmaking
Rules regarding instructional practices	Few rules regarding instructional practices
Frequent formal evaluation	Infrequent or unused formal evaluation
Structure controlling school activities	Structure unrelated to school activities
Environmental pressures and program diversity increase structural complexity	Environmental pressures and program diversity increase structural complexity
Environmental pressures and program diversity increase the need for coordination	Neither environmental pressures nor program diversity increase the need for coordination

dwindling resources, and perhaps more meetings to discuss and plan strategies to deal with the new shortages. Similarly, in a school where there are a variety of scheduling alternatives or numerous alternatives for earning class credit, a bureaucratic perspective would expect specialized staff members to keep track of these programs or would anticipate more coordination, through meetings or rules for student or staff conduct.

In fact, bureaucratic and loose-coupling theories are similar in this regard. One subtle difference is that loose-coupling theorists maintain that the ties between the school and its supporting organizations and the specific issues of local concern are the environmental factors that affect the structure of the school to the largest extent.

Another difference exists between the two theories with respect to the influence of community colleges on the schools. The bureaucratic view would be that community colleges facilitate the work of schools by absorbing graduates rather indiscriminately. If such postgraduate institutions are available, less pressure is applied to schools to have their graduates do well enough to be accepted by more rigorous 4-year colleges. The net result is to alleviate the pressure for structural elaborations such as remedial reading specialists within high schools. Loose-coupling theorists, on the other hand, would see community colleges as just another public to please. Remedial reading teachers would still be needed. One would expect, therefore, to find more, rather than less, elaborate structure in schools located near community colleges.

Bureaucratic vs. Loose-Coupling Theory: Coordination

The most clear-cut difference between bureaucratic and loose-coupling theories of school organization, however, relates to the second subsystem of the organization—coordination of activity. Contrary to bureaucratic theory, loose-coupling theory maintains that environmental pressures may not result in additional efforts at coordination and control. Supervision procedures may remain skimpy and rules governing instruction relatively rare, despite a complex program or problems in the environment that may require structural additions.

For example, a school may receive support (or pressure) for a special program that requires additional administrators or teachers in the school. However, these staff members, when added, may not closely supervise implementation of the program, or their work may not be carefully coordinated (through personal evaluations, rules, or meetings) with the work of other staff members. The result of the pressure or support, then, is a structural response (addition of specialists and programs), in an unstructured (unsupervised, uncoordinated) fashion.

THEORIES VS. SURVEY FINDINGS

We can use the NIE/NASSP survey results to explore the actual relationships between these factors in contemporary high schools. We chose to use a range of specific indicators of each of the theoretical variables to get a more detailed picture of what the relationships actually are. There is one possible hazard in using this kind of approach: With such a large sample and with such a long list of variables, one would expect, statistically, a few isolated, random effects to appear. Therefore we need to look for consistency as well as strength in relationships among sets of indicators.

The structure, coordination, and program variables used in our comparison of the two models have been described in earlier chapters. We need to add to this list a number of features of the school's environment. We have four indicators of problematic or inconsistent resources coming into the school, three dealing with the number and variety of ties the school has to other organizations and two dealing with the qualities expected of graduates from the school.

Incoming Resources

- *Budget Decrease.* A report by the principal that the school's per-pupil budget has decreased over the last 5 years. Changes in the availability of financial support have long been thought to affect private schools. Financial support is becoming increasingly problematic for public schools as well.
- *Enrollment Decrease.* A report by the principal that there has been a decrease in the school's enrollment over the past 5 years. In many areas, the amount of money received by the school is directly tied to the number of pupils attending that school.
- *Percentage Nonwhite Students.* The percentage of the student body that is American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, black, Hispanic, and other nonwhite.
- *High Socioeconomic Status.* The principal's report of the occupations and housing of the students' parents. Research suggests that highly educated and active citizens are more likely to criticize schools' performances and to vote against school bonds.

Interorganizational Ties

- *Specially Funded Programs.* The number of the following State or federally funded programs in the school: Federal Title I, State compensatory education, vocational education, career education, special education, bilingual education, assistance to Indochinese refugee children, library programs, Title IVc, free or reduced-price lunch programs, student transportation, ESAA (desegregation), and other special State or Federal programs.

- *State Management Rules.* The principal's report of the State regulations governing the following activities: adding a new academic course; setting rules for student behavior; determining course objectives; setting conditions for early exit/early graduation; adopting a new school grading practice; setting criteria for evaluating teacher performance; and allocating school budget funds among departments, teachers, or activities.
- *District Management Rules.* The principal's report of district regulations governing the sorts of activities listed above.

Expectations of Outgoing Graduates

- *Absorbing Institutions.* The presence, within about 5 miles of the school, of the following types of postsecondary schools: a 2-year college, a postsecondary vocational school, and/or an adult or continuing education school. The bureaucratic argument is that a large number of these sorts of institutions located near the school represents a low level of environmental pressure. The loose-coupling view suggests that this variable is really a measure of the strength of one sort of interorganizational tie, that these institutions represent another public and, therefore, additional environmental pressure for the school.
- *Breadth of Parents' Goals.* The principal's report of the importance of a number of goals to parents. The goals included teaching the basic skills, developing high moral standards and citizenship, teaching students to get along with others, developing individual responsibility for management of one's own learning program, preparing students for the worlds of work and college, and developing esthetic appreciation.

RESULTS

What factors predict an elaborate school structure? We answered this question in two steps. First we looked at whether school and district size, metropolitan location, or region of the country related to features of school organization. We had found that many of our environmental and programmatic features (the so-called predictor variables) varied depending on school location or size. So using a multiple regression approach, we looked at the effects of environment and program on structure, with these variables included as controls. We used the same basic strategy to examine the relationships between coordination and features of the environment, program, and structure.

Factors Related to Structure

School size is a reliable and consistent predictor of two of our three sets of structure variables. Larger schools are likely to have a more complex division of labor—more specialists, more assistant administrators, more aides and volunteers, more departments, and more committees. Decisionmaking within the school is more broad-based in larger schools, mostly because there are more staff members in more types of roles who are available to participate. Participation by clients and representatives from the district office is not substantially higher in these larger schools, however. It seems, quite logically, that in schools with more students, there are more staff members, a larger number of departments, and a wider variety of roles for the additional staff members than in smaller schools. Where a school has this number and variety of staff members, staff are likely to be involved in decisionmaking. The only regional differences are that student and parent participation in decisionmaking is much more widespread in the West. Aides and volunteers are much more common in classrooms in the Western States as well. In general, however, it is school size, rather than regional or metropolitan location, that best predicts structure.

The role the principal assumes is not related to the size or location of the school. Furthermore, there are no effects of environmental or programmatic factors on the principal's role, with one exception: The broader the range of goals principals report that parents hold for the school, the more broadly active a role principals report playing. That is, as parental expectations of schools rise, the larger or more diverse become the principals' jobs. The particular role principals assume—collegial, managerial, or ambassadorial—seems to be more a matter of personal preference than the result of any of the sorts of influences we measured. Also, aside from this relationship to principal role, the breadth of parental educational goals is unrelated to organizational structure.

Neither a per-pupil budget nor an enrollment decrease made an appreciable difference in patterns of participation or staffing differentiation. It is quite possible, however, that between 1972 and 1977 the level of decreases in these incoming resources suffered by schools was mild or that the losses were offset by other compensations.

The socioeconomic status (SES) of the community also seems to have little effect on the organizational structure of the school. Schools located in high-SES neighborhoods seem to have slightly more aides and volunteers in the classroom and a larger number of departments. Aside from these two relationships, however, the socioeconomic status of parents does not affect the division of labor in schools. Surprisingly, we found that breadth of participation in the school is unrelated to parent status. Perhaps high-SES parents are active in other facets of school life, rather than through regular decisionmaking and evaluation channels.

We found a consistent set of relationships between interorganizational ties and participation breadth. Schools with a larger variety of specially funded

programs, and schools in States or districts with extensive rules about school management, had more broadly based participation in decisionmaking and evaluation. Although we found that schools with numerous sources of special funding have a more complex division of labor, neither the number of State nor district rules seems to affect the division of labor in local schools.

We were interested to find that the presence of numerous postsecondary agencies affected the organizational structure as an interorganizational tie (as predicted by the loose-coupling view), rather than as an institution relieving pressures for outcome efficiency. We found that schools that had more of these student-absorbing agencies available had a more complex division of labor and more broadly based participation. These sorts of agencies seem to be just one more public with which the school must maintain relations rather than a buffer to help relieve one set of pressures toward accountability.

A school with more complex programs or a more complex program management system—a variety of traditional or nontraditional courses; complex instructional programs; early exit/graduation programs; credit, grading, course-length, or scheduling alternatives; a variety of special facilities and open-space classrooms—had a more specialized staff and broader participation in decisionmaking and evaluation. This set of relationships was consistent and striking.

There is considerable overlap between the bureaucratic and loose-coupling predictions about school structure. And we found a general pattern of relationships in high schools to support these shared predictions. Where the two views make subtly different predictions, we found that the evidence favored the loose-coupling approach. The strongest set of relationships between the environment and structure were effects of environmental ties, and postsecondary institutions served as interorganizational ties. Chart 4 summarizes these results. The major test is yet to come, however. The central difference between the two pictures has to do with effects of environment, programs, and structure on coordination.

Factors Related to Coordination Mechanisms

What factors related to extensive coordination mechanisms? We found few effects of school size or location on coordination. We reported earlier that there is broader participation, including participation in teacher evaluation, in larger schools, partly by virtue of the additional pool of staff members available to participate. However, teachers in these larger schools are evaluated less frequently than those in smaller schools. Also, principals in larger schools do not observe in classrooms any more frequently than their counterparts in smaller schools, so they observe each classroom teacher much less frequently.

This somewhat startling set of results lends weight to speculations about the uses of formal teacher evaluations. Are these evaluations efficient? Valuable? Ceremonial? Perhaps the additional members of the administrative staff in these schools fill in part of the supervision void; but, given that the frequency of formal evaluations (in which these staff members are more likely to par-

ticipate) is lower in larger schools, there is little support in the data for this line of reasoning.

Principals in Western schools characteristically have a more broadly active, and especially a more collegial, role. Schools in the Western States also have fewer rules concerning student behavior and more frequent and varied staff and administrative meetings. It also appears that interdisciplinary classes are rare in the Midwest.

There were no consistent effects of environmental factors on coordination mechanisms. Interdisciplinary classes were somewhat more common in schools that had experienced a budget decrease, and administrative meetings were more common in schools located in high-SES areas. Also, there are fewer apparent school-made management rules in those schools located in districts with extensive rules about school management. In general, however, there was a

Chart 4. How the Environment and Program Diversity Affect School Structure

Variable	Effect on School Structure
Size	Large schools have more specialists, assistant administrators, aids and volunteers, departments and committees.
Interorganizational Ties	A large number of specially funded programs and State or district rules result in more participation in decisionmaking and evaluation.
Reports of Parental Goals	The broader the range of goals principals report parents have for the school, the more broadly active a role the principal reports playing.
Postsecondary Institutions	Schools surrounded by many postsecondary institutions have more decisionmaking participation and a more complex division of labor.
Program Diversity	Schools with highly diverse programs have a more specialized staff, more decisionmaking participation, and more frequent evaluations.

noticeable lack of impact of the environment on coordination mechanisms. Problems with incoming resources, broad and strongly held parent expectations for the school as reported by the principal, and extensive, strong interorganizational ties simply do not produce rules, meetings, personal evaluations, or collaboration.

Similarly, neither complex programs nor an intricate system of program management seemed to produce added coordination. The one, very logical, exception is that teachers were much more likely to teach a class jointly if there were open-space classrooms available in the school.

As far as the relationship between structure and coordination is concerned, there are only a few scattered and very low-level associations among these sets of variables, and most of these are negative (situations in which elaborate structure seems to accompany less coordination). The overall picture shows a consistent lack of relationships between structure and coordination, quite similar to the finding that coordination mechanisms are not responsive to environmental or programmatic complexity.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the relationships among these variables are different from what we would expect in a typical bureaucracy. Schools seem to make structural adjustments in reaction to environmental and programmatic pressures. Yet these schools do not appear to rely heavily on rules, meetings, or personal evaluation in the face of these complexities. Activity in schools appears to be buffered from these pressures. These findings suggest a warning for policymakers; radically different approaches to the management of schools may be necessary. One cannot straightforwardly adopt bureaucratic practices or assumptions to widely different schools and expect the same results.

NOTES

1. The following are broadly representative of the newer theories: Karl E. Weick, "Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, March 1976; Michael D. Cohen, James D. March, and Johan P. Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, September 1972; James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations* (Bergen, Norway: Universitetsforlaget, 1976); John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, "Institutional Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1977. There are some differences among these sources, so we present a general overview of these positions.
2. See, for example, Margaret R. Davis and E. Ann Stackhouse, "The Importance of Formal Appearances: The Implementation of Programs for the Evaluation of Elementary Schools and Teachers," in Davis et al., *The Structure of Educational Systems: Explorations in the Theory of Loosely-Coupled Organizations* (Stanford: Stanford University Center for Educational Research, 1977).

3. The literature on the nonimplementation of educational innovations summarized in J. V. Baldridge and T. E. Deal, *Managing Change in Educational Organizations* (San Francisco: McCutchan, 1975) combined with the generally high faith in and consistent support of schools as compared to other institutions buttresses this argument.
4. For discussions of some of the other aims of public education in the United States see David B. Tyack, *The One Best System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974) or Robert Dreeben, *On What is Learned in School* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Weseley, 1968).
5. Weick, *op. cit.*
6. These policy differences are discussed in chapter 7.
7. Weber, *op. cit.*

6. *What Problems Do Today's Schools Face?*

The emerging picture of high schools contains both familiar and unfamiliar images: traditional scheduling arrangements, comprehensive and diverse programs, and a certain amount of disconnectedness between the management structure and what people in the school actually do. Because the perceptions most people have of high schools are often radically different from the picture that our study results suggest, it is reasonable to inquire whether or not principals find themselves in a somewhat uncomfortable position.

This chapter focuses on how principals evaluate their goals for themselves, their schools, and their jobs. While many may misunderstand the nature of high school programs and organization, the principal emerges as a confident and satisfied manager.

Principals' Goals

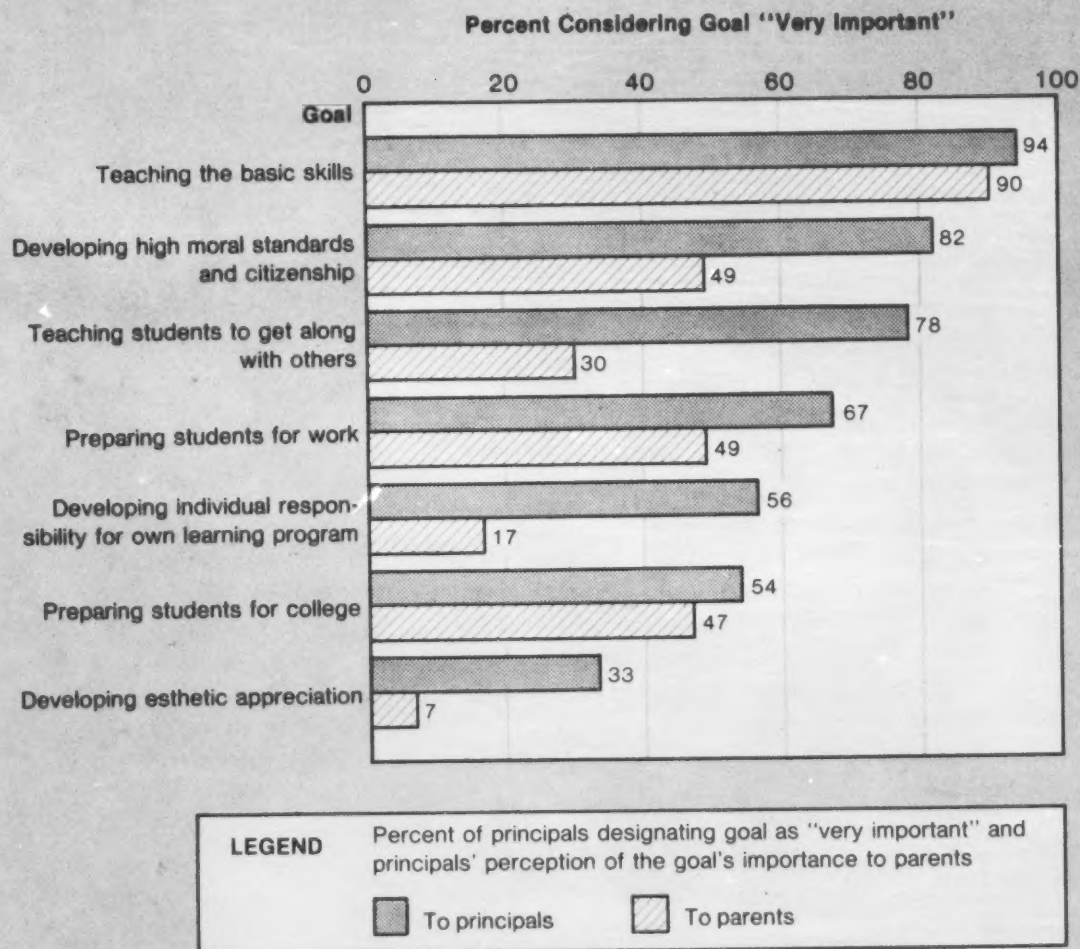
Although most principals have a wide range of educational goals for their schools (item 67), their primary concern is that students learn basic skills. (See figure 12.) For the great majority of principals, this concern probably reflects the nationwide "back to basics" movement. Developing high moral standards and good citizenship practices in students and preparing them for employment or college are the next most important educational goals of principals. They report that developing esthetic appreciation and individual responsibility for the student's own learning program are, relative to other goals, the least important.

A comparison of principals' goals for students with goals that principals perceive parents setting for their children (item 26) indicates strong agreement on the importance of teaching basics, as well as on the need for preparing students for employment or college. Nonetheless, wide discrepancies exist in other categories, particularly in the "softer," less tangible areas. Principals believe that parents are not particularly interested in whether schools teach citizenship, help students develop esthetic appreciation, or encourage people

to get along together. This difference in goals between parents and principals, however, is probably due to the fact that professionals have broader goals for education than parents have.

The fact that principals see parents as less concerned about such goals is noteworthy. The differences probably contribute to some problems: Principals cite parental lack of interest in their children's progress and their lack of involvement with the school as among the most serious problems they face (item 45).

Figure 12
Importance of Educational Goals

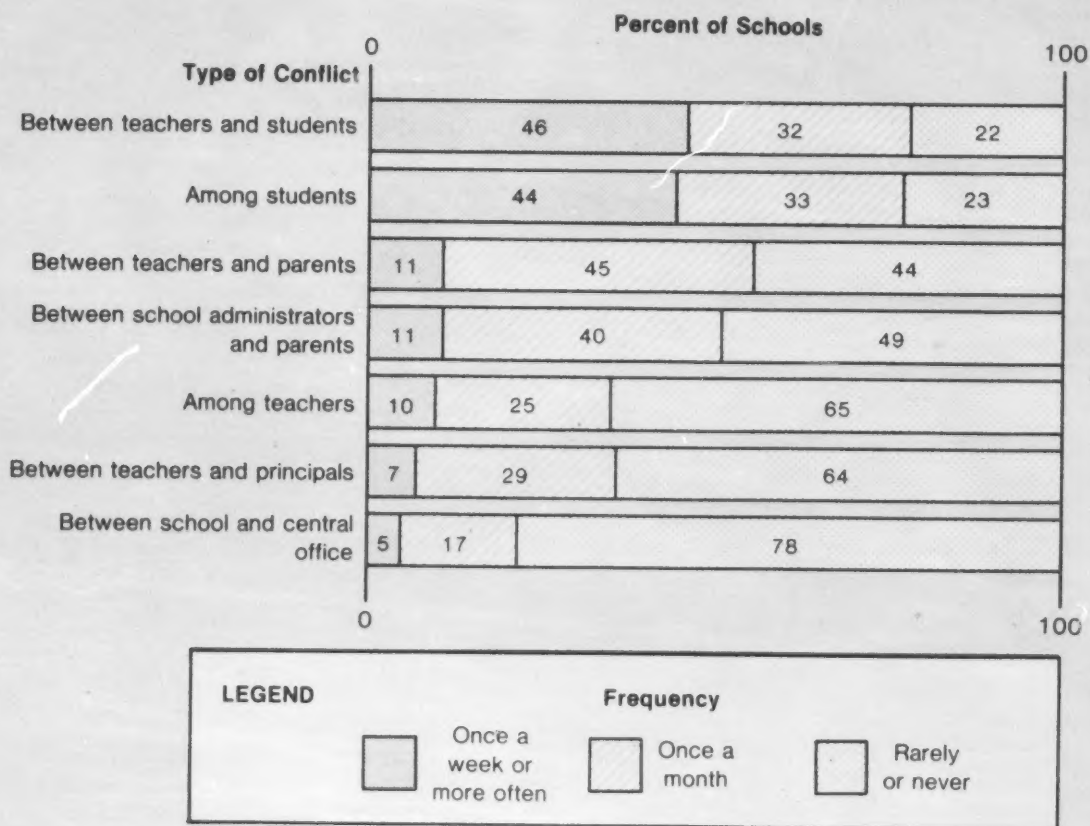


Source: NIE/NASSP survey, items 26 and 67.

Conflict and Problems

In a small percentage of schools, principals report that students and teachers have problems getting along with each other. Principals were asked how often such "conflict" occurs within their schools (item 46). Although respondents may have defined "conflict" differently, their answers make its existence quite clear. In almost half of the schools, principals report that conflict among students and between students and teachers occurs frequently; conflict between and among other components of the school population is virtually negligible. (See figure 13.) Even with the difficulties imposed by varying educational goals of principals and parents discussed earlier, the principals report that they are either very satisfied (48 percent) or somewhat satisfied (46 percent) with their relationships with parents and the community.

Figure 13
Frequency of Conflict



Source: NIE/NASSP survey, item 46.

Participants in the survey were asked how serious specific problems are in their schools (item 45). The results show that no one problem listed is considered serious by a majority of respondents. (See table 4.) However, at least 40 percent of the principals consider student apathy, parental lack of involvement in school matters, and the paperwork required to comply with Federal regulations to be significant problems. On the subject of Federal paperwork, few principals (only 11 percent) objected to the substantive requirements of such individual programs as equal employment or desegregation; many principals objected to the forms and reports that Federal agencies demand.

These findings parallel those of the NASSP's senior high school principals' study.¹ Its results show that students' lack of motivation, parents' lack of in-

Table 4. Problems

	Percent Answering "Serious" or "Very Serious"
Clientele	
Parents' lack of involvement in school matters	40%
Student apathy	41
Parents' lack of interest in students' progress	36
Student absenteeism (entire day)	35
Students' cutting classes	30
Student disruptiveness	7
School Personnel, Resources, Size	
School too small	26
Too few guidance counselors	20
Teacher lack of commitment or motivation	15
Teacher absenteeism	13
Teacher union specifications	12
Inadequate instructional materials	10
School too large	10
Teacher turnover	7
Teacher incompetence	5
District, State, Federal	
Too much paperwork in complying with Federal requirements	42
Too much paperwork in complying with State requirements	36
Too much paperwork in complying with district requirements	20
Implementing Federal or State requirements for equal opportunity (employment, desegregation, etc.)	11
State-imposed curriculum restrictions	9
District office interference with principals' leadership	7

Source: NIE/NASSP survey, item 45.

terest, and student absenteeism are the most frequently reported constraints on principals' efforts to perform effectively. Compliance with specific Federal requirements is not a serious problem to those principals either.

What factors are associated with problems in schools? Using multiple regression analysis, we examined the independent effects of school size and location, socioeconomic status, and structural and coordination variables on the likelihood of a school being burdened with problems. Schools in which principals report greatest problems are more likely to be located in large districts and also to suffer from many conflicts among students and between students and teachers. Schools where principals report many problems also have two other things in common: low socioeconomic status of students' families and numerous assistant principals in the school. These results suggest that the problems outsiders have ascribed to all high schools may, in fact, be confined to just one group of schools—those with students who have well-defined, but perhaps unmet, needs. This finding may explain the presence of numerous assistant administrators in schools with students of low socioeconomic status: The assistants are there to keep things under control as well as to help address some of the special needs.

What Factors Predict Principals' Job Satisfaction?

Despite the problems and conflicts that principals report, in general they seem fairly satisfied with their positions, their status, and their sense of self-fulfillment (item 69). Almost all the principals participating in this survey are either very satisfied (65 percent) or somewhat satisfied (29 percent) with their occupation. Similar satisfaction levels were also found by the NASSP survey.² Of the 1,600 principals in that survey, approximately two-thirds described their jobs as being more than moderately prestigious and self-fulfilling.

Although overall job satisfaction of principals is high, in some aspects individuals are less content. (See figure 14.) Primary among these are the level of student achievement and school board performance. Only one principal in four is very satisfied with student achievement levels, and just over one-third of the principals are very satisfied with school board performance. The roots of dissatisfaction are impossible to identify with current data. We surmise, however, that dissatisfaction probably arises in part because principals are less able to control what happens in these areas.

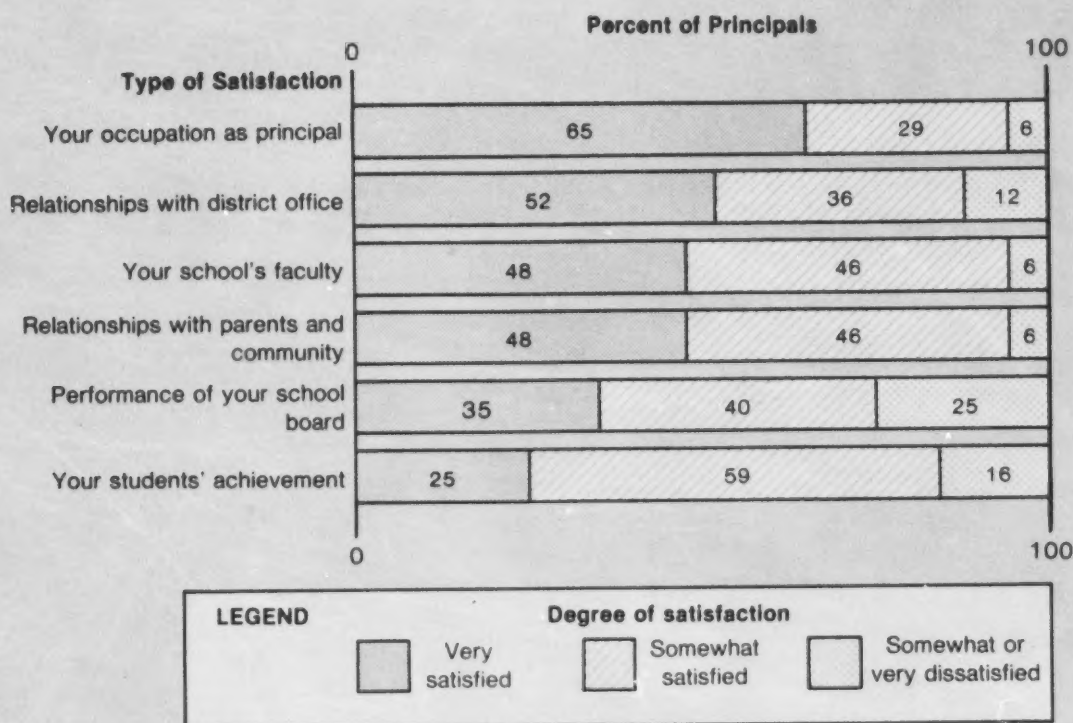
Using multiple regression techniques, we examined the unique effects of principal background variables (education, experience, age), region and location, district characteristics (size, rules, socioeconomic status), school organization (structure and coordination), and problems (conflict and client disinterest) on principal satisfaction.

Principals who report playing an active role in school affairs appear to be the most satisfied with their occupation. Dissatisfaction appears to be a function of the problems and level of conflict that the principals reported in their schools. Principals are also more likely to be satisfied if few district regulations govern school activity.

Finally, principals in the East do not appear as satisfied with their jobs as those in other regions. Interestingly, organizational structure and coordination, school size, and principal background characteristics, seem to have little to do with job satisfaction.

To summarize, principals' goals are broader than those of the parents, and this difference may lead principals to believe that parents are just not sufficiently interested in their children's education. Most principals are satisfied with their positions as educational leaders and managers, but those in certain locations and in schools experiencing conflict are less satisfied.

Figure 14
Principal Satisfaction



Source: NIE/NASSP survey, item 69.

1. David R. Byrne, Susan A. Hines, Lloyd E. McCleary, *The Senior High School Principals*, Volume I: The National Survey, (Reston, Va: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1978).
2. *Ibid.*

7. *Where Do We Go From Here?* *Interpretations and Applications**

How should high schools be organized? Judging from the debates taking place both in individual schools and at policymaking levels, no one really seems to know. But everyone in the argument holds a strong opinion. Quite often, these opinions become polarized. One side sees high schools as "organizational anarchies" that need to be tightened. As a recent letter to a New England newspaper noted, "The problems at our high school stem from one fundamental deficiency: the organizational structure is a disaster. The public looks to the principal as being the person in charge, but he is almost devoid of authority to do his job." The changes suggested by the writer of this letter seem obvious: increase the principal's authority and establish order.

But the other side sees high schools as "rigid bureaucracies" that need to be loosened. From this viewpoint, the key problem is one of rigid authority structures and limited instructional approaches. People who hold this view want to disperse central authority, increase participation, and encourage instructional diversity.

When proponents of the two sides meet, sparks fly. Communities divide, school boards split, and administrators leave or retire (willingly or otherwise).

No doubt the debate about how high schools should be organized stems from the lack of consensus about how they actually are organized. We have little evidence to describe generally how educational organizations are structured or how they function. And high schools in particular have fallen outside the analytical gaze of researchers.¹ Consequently, prevailing images of organizational patterns in high schools are heavily influenced by myths, rumors, and unconfirmed anecdotes. Thus, one opinion about the direction change should take is as valid as another.

Conflicting images of high schools may have important consequences beyond just fanning the popular tightness-looseness debate. In practice, mis-

*This chapter was written by Terrence E. Deal, associate professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

perceptions of existing organizational patterns contribute to problems and frustrate efforts to improve or change schools. Critics contend that innovations fail in high schools, policies do not produce intended effects, and reforms are swallowed and compromised. Surprised administrators and frustrated policymakers often wonder why events do not proceed as predicted. Considering high schools as rigid bureaucracies when indeed they may be loosely linked collectives—or vice versa—may be basic to change efforts that miss the mark or fail outright.

For theory and research purposes, inaccurate images of organizational patterns may hinder efforts to understand high schools better. Theories that assume schools are like business or industrial organizations encourage studies that ask the wrong questions or that provide invalid interpretations of results. Researchers who study educational organizations generally are surprised to find different results² and often resort to post-hoc explanations.³

To summarize, the lack of knowledge about organizational patterns in high schools has contributed to three current problems: (1) It has exacerbated the current debate over how loosely or tightly high schools should be organized; (2) it has handicapped efforts to improve schools; and (3) it has misdirected research aimed toward understanding organization and management in high schools.

This NIE study was designed to begin filling the knowledge vacuum. The main thrust was to develop a better understanding of how American high schools are organized. This chapter will highlight the research results, interpret the data from two differing points of view, and suggest in a very preliminary way what the results may mean to high school administrators.

Preliminary Results

From the survey results presented earlier, we can make some general observations about today's high schools:

1. Instructionally, high schools offer a smorgasbord of programs, practices, options, and services. Students can choose from an array of courses on the basis of their personal needs and career goals. If high schools fit the rigid, inflexible patterns suggested by some critics, they do so only in scheduling classes and/or evaluating student performance.
2. Organizationally, high schools are less differentiated, more participatory, and more loosely structured than some people claim. The principal and teacher are the primary actors, supported by specialists, aides, and assistant principals or deans. Principals participate in decisionmaking arenas on a wide range of issues, but so do others—teachers, specialists, other administrators, counselors, and parents—particularly in their spheres of responsibility. Rules exist to govern what students do. Some rules exist for teachers, but not in instructional matters. Formal coordination—keeping efforts linked—appears to occur mainly through a wide variety of meetings (held at least monthly) and through annual evaluation.

3. The internal parts of high schools are not related to each other in ways that conventional organization theory predicts, and many of these "nonrelationships" violate the expectations of logic and reason. For example, where people are intensively involved in the process of evaluating teachers or principals, it seems reasonable that the frequency of evaluation might also rise—if only slightly. Analysis of the results, however, shows that where evaluations involve more people they tend to be less frequent. Equally puzzling nonrelationships lead to the general conclusion that important aspects of high school organization—administrative structure, and rules and other mechanisms for coordination—are not connected to each other.
4. Formal structure does relate to certain aspects of a school's instructional complexity. Schools with more varied courses, credit options, and services also have a more complex and differentiated staff, which exercises broader participation in school decisions. However, the coordination mechanisms we examined—the use of rules, evaluations, and meetings—have little to do with how complex the school's instructional programs are. For instance, one might have reasonably expected that, in a school with numerous courses and nonclassroom arrangements, meetings and evaluations would occur more frequently, in the interest of control. However, they do not.

Interpreting the Results: Two Points of View

What do the results mean? Setting aside disputes over methodology—selection of the sample, validation of the questionnaire items, and veracity of principals—two main points of view can be used to interpret the results: theories of bureaucracy and a theory of "disconnectedness."

From a bureaucratic viewpoint, the results suggest two possibilities. First, the study may have looked for relationships by asking the wrong people. In elementary schools, there is evidence that individualized instruction produces changes in the way teachers organize their work, resulting in more team teaching.⁴ In short, if the survey had asked teachers, expected relationships between various organizational components might have appeared.

Second, the absence of relationships among the various parts of high schools may indicate organizational laxity that has significant costs or unwanted consequences. Critics of education frequently cite declining test scores and high illiteracy rates among high school graduates as signs of diminished effectiveness. Some theorists suggest that unless organizations conform structurally to environmental or task demands, their effectiveness will be reduced. Organizational "looseness" thus may have a price—but some measures of school effectiveness must be developed to help assess these potential costs.

Adherents of the disconnectedness viewpoint expect findings similar to the ones in this study.⁵ They see schools as organizations with unclear, sometimes conflicting goals and characterized by a highly individualistic, unstandardized science of teaching. The relationships between means (instruction) and goals

(learning) are unclear. To people of this persuasion, bureaucratic theory imposes assumptions which, in the case of schools, should be relaxed.

To theorists in this school, organizational processes in schools take on a new meaning. Formal structure and coordination mechanisms help to insure that community expectations are visibly upheld, and to maintain parental and community confidence in the school. Involving numerous people in decisions, distributing a book of rules and policies, holding frequent meetings, engaging specialists to meet particular learning needs—these activities increase community trust in the school, entirely apart from their substantive value.

However, proponents of disconnectedness hold that this trust is jeopardized by systematic evaluation or inspection of teaching activities. Such efforts may run the risk of exposing inconsistencies and contradictions. Ambiguities are inherent in schools; exposing them would cause conflict, reduce morale, and weaken the bond of confidence between the school and the community. To most critics of education, increasing the number of participants in teacher evaluation is something a "good" organization does, and to do so can certainly increase the level of information and mutual support. But increasing the frequency of evaluation can also jeopardize both internal morale and community support by exposing weak teachers and other institutional problems.

Disconnectedness theorists raise concerns about such mechanisms and their effects on school personnel. When there is pressure on schools to "tighten up the ship"—to increase the level of connectedness—their response will be largely ceremonial and ritualistic, to conform just enough to placate critics, without causing internal dissension or alarming the community.

Thus, proponents of the two organizational views will interpret the survey results differently. The first will argue primarily that the existing patterns of disconnectedness have unwanted costs and consequences. The second will argue that, in educational organizations, such patterns are to be expected and may even be useful. The results therefore have different meanings, depending on the theoretical viewpoint of the interpreter.

Possible Applications: Live with Looseness, Tighten the Ship, or Tighten Loosely?

It would be premature and unwise to use these preliminary results to develop guidelines for those who work in and administer American high schools. Just as the various parts of a high school organization are often disconnected, so is the relationship between theory and practice. Gaps between the two exist even when research results are less tentative than those under consideration here. But assuming that these results are representative and valid (and we believe they are), some general implications for practice begin to emerge.

First, high schools simply are not as tightly controlled as many critics of education have maintained. Some communities may still harbor high schools that are stodgy, inflexible, and unresponsive, but the predominant pattern na-

tionally is one of organizations that appear to be flexible, responsive, diverse, and participatory in the style of decisionmaking.

Second, many high school principals may be encouraged by the knowledge that they share their problems of trying to control, direct, and administer loosely connected organizations with a significant number of their counterparts. Some critics (the New England case cited earlier, for example) seem to believe that their local high schools are unique organizational disasters, when, in fact, disconnectedness may exist in many of the Nation's high schools. Thus, some high school administrators may find these results useful to persuade the community or school superintendent that there may be some other explanation for existing organizational conditions besides the principal's ineptitude or mismanagement.

Third, the research results clarify (and perhaps complicate) the tightness-looseness debate. In many communities, the issue is whether the local high school is a rigid bureaucracy that needs to be loosened or an organizational anarchy that needs to be tightened. The research results suggest that, in most communities, the local high school probably is organized loosely.

So the question remains: Should high schools be tightened? Our present research results do not deal with this issue, but three different strategies seem possible.

1. **"Live with Looseness."** One option is to accept the current organizational disconnectedness in high schools. Proponents of this strategy, including some school administrators, reject the urge to tighten and claim that, over time, structure will evolve to meet internal and external needs. The strategy gathers some support from the fact that educational organizations do and will probably continue to receive financial aid, provide employment for professionals and local community members, and provide a focal point for community energies. Although criticism, issues, problems, and crises occur, they pass.

This strategy thus suggests that principals should not take themselves or issues so seriously; that arenas should be provided to wear down or co-opt those who oppose existing patterns; that different parts of the organization should be developed to respond to short-term criticisms (alternative schools, study halls, remedial programs), and that structural adjustments will evolve (perhaps randomly) in response to shifts in internal and environmental expectations.

2. **"Tighten the Ship."** The second strategy argues for a structural tightening by centralizing more authority in the principal's role, developing and implementing workable policies and rules, limiting the participatory base, and instituting more rigorous evaluation practices. The role of principal becomes one of active management.

This approach may work, but it may have some serious internal and external repercussions. The current structure of high schools makes it difficult for a principal—or any other individual—to control direction and activity. Broad-based participation now gives everyone a voice—even though each voice may advocate a different idea.

Infrequent evaluation provides autonomy and freedom, but does little to identify weak teachers or help them improve. Rules and policies that do not affect activity or behavior encourage creativity and adaptability, but they provide little continuity or uniformity. Many principals are thus caught in a dilemma—communities want to control the schools, but they want the principals to run them.

The potential costs of tightening the structure of high schools may be too severe to warrant the attempt. An important aspect of the principal's job is one of soothing, encouraging evolutionary adaptation, absorbing conflict, and "hunkering down" in the face of opposition to significant changes in the status quo. Tightening to many administrators, thus, seems cynical, Machiavellian, and almost unacceptable.

3. **"Tighten Loosely."** The third possibility has an objective comparable to the second (tightness is desirable), but the means are different. A principal can tighten loosely by working informally and symbolically to provide internal cohesion and external support to a school while trying not to lessen the school's autonomy, staff participation, or community support.

This strategy of tightening loosely attempts to develop short-range agreements about general direction (for example, convening a representative group to produce a 1-year school plan); to provide teachers and other organizational members with helpful advice and informal suggestions about teaching and other professional activities; to emphasize the role of participation in negotiating organizational meaning; to provide rituals and ceremonies to promote organizational understanding, reduce conflict, and enhance community support; and to build legitimacy, confidence, and a binding organizational identity. The role of the principal is one of symbolic leader and senior colleague.

The approach may yield some general direction, but its path is difficult and uncertain. Many principals carry out the role intuitively; others will find it impossible. While this approach may avoid repercussions, it also may not work—even though there is some evidence that principals who "tighten loosely" administer schools where teachers are more satisfied⁶ and reforms are implemented more successfully than elsewhere.⁷

Conclusion

These three possible strategies are meant to be suggestive and are neither conclusive nor all-encompassing. Every administrator needs to develop an approach to local organizational issues that considers or selectively blends these strategies, or to devise new ones. As analysis of these high school data proceeds and more exhaustive studies are conducted, evidence in support of any of these possibilities may emerge. In the meantime, what we do know is that high schools are not as bureaucratic as many people believe. The extent to which they need tightening or loosening to survive and prosper, and the circumstances in which tightening or loosening is appropriate, are areas for further inquiry.

NOTES

1. Susan Abramowitz and Ellen Tenenbaum, "National High School Study: A Conceptual Framework," working paper, School Finance and Organizational Division, National Institute of Education, November 1977.
2. Terrence Deal, John W. Meyer, and W. Richard Scott, "Organizational Influences in Educational Innovation," in J. Victor Baldrige and Terrence E. Deal, eds., *Managing Change in Educational Organizations* (Berkeley: McCutcheon Publishing Co., 1975).
3. Gerald Moeller, "Bureaucracy and Teachers' Sense of Power," *School Review* 72, 1964, pp. 137-157.
4. Elizabeth G. Cohen, "Coordination Control and Facilitation of Instruction in Schools," paper presented to NIE Conference on School Organization and Its Effects on Student Outcomes, San Diego, January 1978.
5. Weick, op. cit.; Michael D. Cohen, et al., op. cit.; March, et al., op. cit.; Meyer, et al., op. cit.
6. Elizabeth G. Cohen, op. cit.
7. Deal, Meyer, and Scott, op. cit.

Postscript

The high school study was initiated to provide baseline data on secondary education organization and management and to explore the determinants of high school structure. The first phase of this undertaking relied on principals as informants. Research will begin in fall 1978 to gather followup information from teachers and counselors in a sample of 100 of the respondent schools. In general, the followup will assess the following:

- **Congruence.** Where do principals' reports of school organization and management differ from those of teachers and counselors? What does this lack of congruence have to say about "life" in high schools?
- **Causal Linkages.** Reports from different actors will enable us to trace the influence of each organizational level on another. Phase I looked at the impact of environment and programs on school structure. Subsequent studies will investigate how all these variables affect teachers and counselors.

The followup work will entail several additional surveys and case studies and will be undertaken in both private and public high schools. Specifically, this work will include the following:

1. **Teacher Survey.** The survey of teachers will focus on two different areas. First, teachers will be asked a set of questions from the principal questionnaire. Analysis will determine the extent to which teacher responses differ from those of principals. In many cases we expect differences between principals and teachers since their interests are different (i.e., management vs. teaching). However, there are some topics, such as school policy issues, where discrepancies are probably illustrative of school management type, of the environment, or of the program. We also want to probe teacher satisfaction and attitudes about their work environment to determine the nature of staff outcomes in schools with different organizational structures.

2. **Counselor Survey.** Primarily, we will investigate the nature of the counselor's role. To this end, we will examine the structural and environmental conditions which may result in the bureaucratization of the counselor's role; the extent to which counselors perform their duties to maintain organization routines; and how the counselor's role changes as structural conditions are varied. Another area of investigation has to do with interchanges among counselors, staff, and students. We want to describe counselor and staff communication patterns and the factors which either inhibit or facilitate them.

3. **Sex Education Study.** Thirty-seven percent of the principals in the Phase I sample reported that sex or family life education was offered as a separate course in their school. In light of the new initiatives announced by the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to deal with the problem of teenage pregnancy, NIE will survey these schools to determine the nature of the courses offered, the topics covered, and the clientele served. A report describing the state of sex education and family life courses will be produced.

4. **Case Studies.** The case studies will provide an in-depth view of structure and coordination in schools and participants' responses to various organizational arrangements. The survey of principals suggests that school structure does not appear to coordinate activity within the school. The question then becomes, "What function does school structure serve?" Also germane is, "What controls activity if structure doesn't?"

5. **Environmental Study.** In addition to the data provided by principals, we have gathered an array of State- and district-level data. These data will enable us to determine what important State and district leverage points exist in the schools' environment. On the State level, we have compiled such information as curriculum requirements; funding mechanisms, and staffing patterns in State departments of education. In addition, a survey of State departments of education will be undertaken to provide information about monitoring and administrative practices in State categorical programs. Our district-level profiles include such information as crime and unemployment statistics, district office staffing patterns, etc.

Phase I of this study also included a survey of 600 private schools, stratified by region of the country, geographic location, and Catholic/non-Catholic affiliation. A basic tenet underlying the high school survey is that a school's environment is likely to influence a school's structure. This should hold especially for private secondary schools, which operate in a limited market environment. Plans are currently underway to construct a model that takes into consideration the unique characteristics of the external environment and the structural properties of private schools.

Additional analyses of the private school data will entail a descriptive and analytic public-private comparison. Last, we will use a 1970 National Center of Education Statistics data tape of the universe of private schools to (1) compare the fiscal, staffing, client, and curricular characteristics of private schools over a 7-year period and (2) investigate the determinants of longevity

among private schools. The results are currently being analyzed; we expect to publish a report in Spring 1979.

A technical monograph, providing an in-depth theoretical and methodological treatment of the data reported here is also available from the Educational Finance Division, National Institute of Education, 1200 19th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20208.

Data tapes from the principal survey are available through the National Archives and Record Service, Machine Readable Archives Division (NMR), Washington, D.C. 20408. In light of promises of confidentiality, tapes will not contain personal identifiers.

Appendix A

Survey Results

Total number of respondents to the questionnaire = 1448.

Number of valid responses to each item = n.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

1. How many students were enrolled in your school on October 1, 1976 for the 1976-77 academic year?

Enrollment	Percentage of Schools
0-249	11%
250-749	34
750-1,499	36
1,500 or more	19
n = 1448	

2. What grades are included in your school?

Grades	Percentage of Schools
9-12	49.5%
10-12	19.5
7-12	18.2
PreK or K-12	7.1
8-12	3.5
1-12	1.9
Other	0.3
n = 1448	

3. If your school is organized by subject area departments, how many departments are there?

Number of Departments	Percentage of Schools
Fewer than 5	3.7%
5-8	27.0
9-12	39.8
13-16	16.0
More than 16	1.3
Does not apply	12.2

n = 1384

4. Please note the length of your school's courses for which credit is granted. Categorize by "dominant length" and "all others currently operating."

	Dominant Length	Also in Use
	(percentage of schools)	
Semester length	71.2%	16.1%
Quarter length	8.9	22.8
Trimester length	3.8	1.5
Minicourses	0.8	11.5
45-15 or other variant of year-round schedule	3.3	1.1
Other	10.9	3.6

n = 1432

5. What is the dominant daily scheduling system in use in your school? What others are in use in your school?

Scheduling System	Dominant	Also in Use
	(percentage of schools)	
Traditional (35-60 minute periods)	93.3%	1.3%
Modular (10-30 minute periods)	2.4	1.9
Block or departmental (2 hours or longer)	0.7	17.5
Flexible or open (combination of timings to meet class needs)	1.9	4.1
Daily demand (student allocates own time)	0.3	1.0
Other	1.7	1.3

n = 1438

6. Does your school operate on a year-round basis?

School Year	Percentage of Schools
Yes—staggered vacations	1.3%
Yes—voluntary summer school	21.5
No	77.2

n = 1445

7. Some schools are organized into subschools-within-a-school. These may be distinguished by programs they offer (e.g., math-science, arts, occupations), or simply as separate administrative units (such as "house system"). If your school is organized into subunits, please check what type they are:

- ☐ does not apply
☐ organized by programs (e.g., math-science, arts, career)
☐ organized by administrative units (e.g., "house system")
☐ other (please specify) _____

8. Number of subunits: _____

9. Is the entire school divided into subunits? ☐ yes ☐ no

NOTE: Items 7, 8, and 9 could not be interpreted because of the large number of nonrespondents. In addition, some principals who answered "does not apply" or who left items 7, 8, or 9 blank later answered items pertaining to subunits in their answers to items 28 or 31.

10. What type of facilities do your students or staff have access to regularly?

Type of Facility	On Campus	Else-where	Don't Have
Indoor lounge or commons for students	36.7%	1.9%	61.0%
Career information center	79.8	2.0	16.4
Occupational training center	19.8	24.0	53.1
Media production facilities	43.0	8.5	46.0
Remedial reading or math lab	64.8	2.1	32.7
Subject area resources center(s) other than central library	26.1	7.3	66.2
Departmental offices	37.0	2.1	60.8
Teaching resource center for teachers' use	28.7	9.5	60.2
Childcare or nursery school facility	11.8	8.1	79.7
Student cafeteria	90.5	1.2	7.9
Alternative school or alternative school program	16.9	18.4	62.6

n = 1448

11. What percentage of your teachers used open-space, flexible classrooms in the 1976-77 school year?

Percentage of Teachers	Percentage of Schools
0	75%
1-4	11
5-9	6
10 or more	8

n = 1448

12. From which Federal or State programs does your school receive funds?

Source of Funds	Percentage of Schools
Federal Title I (ESEA)	69.1%
State compensatory education	24.4
Vocational education	84.6
Career education	36.2
Special education	79.6
Bilingual education	12.3
Assistance to Indochinese refugee children	8.1
Library programs	61.8
Title IVc—innovative programs (old Title III)	36.2
Free or reduced-price lunch program	92.0
Student transportation	71.6
ESAA (desegregation)	8.6
Other	2.9

n = 1448

13. Do you have an advisory group(s) with whom you meet regularly concerning school policy and planning?

YES 66.6% NO 33.4%
n = 1435

14. If you have an advisory group, who participates?

Group Members	Percentage of Schools
Assistant principals, deans, or subunit heads	45.6%
Guidance counselors	39.4
Department chairpersons	34.8
Teachers	41.9
Students	32.3
Parents	33.6
Others	7.3

n = 1448

15. Which of the following courses are taught in your school?

Course	Percentage of Schools
Biology	92.2%
Biology: BSCS	32.7
Chemistry	93.5
Chemistry: CBA Chem-Study	18.4
Physics	86.5
Physics: PSSC	18.5
French	69.5
Latin	26.9
Russian	3.8
Art	88.1
Auto mechanics	56.8
Wood or machine shop	88.6
Business education	98.5
Homemaking	97.6
Sequential math series through grade 12	89.5
Calculus	54.1

n = 1435

16. How many foreign languages are offered in 3- or 4-year sequence? (Answer both questions.)

Three years: _____ different languages Four years: _____ different languages

Note: The low number of valid responses resulted in uninterpretable data.

17. Which of these subjects are taught as separate courses in your school?

Course	Percentage of Schools
Family life/sex education	36.2%
Values clarification/moral education	6.9
Career exploration	27.9
Ethnic studies	16.7
Women's studies	4.7
Consumer education	60.4
Environmental or ocean studies	26.7
Sociology, anthropology, or psychology	77.1

n = 1448

18. Are all 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-grade students required to take a full year of English?

Grade	Yes	No	n
	(percentage of schools)		
Tenth	99.1%	0.9%	1436
Eleventh	95.9	4.1	1422
Twelfth	65.0	35.0	1353

19. Are 11th- or 12th-grade students grouped by ability in one or more academic subjects?

YES 47.9% NO 52.1%

n = 1448

20a. About what percentage of your 10th- to 12th- grade courses are interdisciplinary or interdepartmental?

Percentage of Courses	Percentage of Schools
None	49%
1-24 percent	28
25-49 percent	4
50-74 percent	4
75 percent or more	15

n = 947

20b. About what percentage of your 10th- to 12th-grade courses are team taught?

Percentage of Courses	Percentage of Schools
None	53%
1-10 percent	36
11 percent or more	11

n = 822

21. Which of the following non-classroom alternatives are available to your students for credit?

Course	Percentage of Schools
Night or adult school	41.2%
College-level courses given at your school	18.9
College courses on a college or university campus	53.4
Credit by examination	17.3
Credit by contract	22.6
Independent study projects	59.6
Off-campus work experience or occupational training	64.5
Community volunteer program	14.2
Travel	7.7
Correspondence courses	53.9
Other	2.7

n = 1448

22. About what percentage of your 11th- and 12th-grade students are engaged in programs (work experience, community service, college courses, etc.) such that they are not on campus full time?

Percentage of 11th Graders	Percentage of Schools
None	19%
1-5 percent	36
6-10 percent	21
More than 10 percent	24

mean = 8.5 percent of students

n = 1147

Percentage of 12th Graders	Percentage of Schools
None	8%
1-5 percent	22
6-10 percent	19
11-20 percent	26
More than 20 percent	25

mean = 15.6 percent of students

n = 1296

23. Which of the following programs does your school offer?

Program	Percentage of Schools
College advanced placement	40.1%
Early graduation	65.4
Early exit via examination (for diploma or equivalent)	9.9
Job placement service	35.9
Individually paced learning	23.1
Diagnostic-prescriptive education (DPE)	11.3
Student exchange program	35.6
Dropout prevention program	19.0
Bilingual program	11.4
Remedial basic skills instruction	65.6

n = 1448

24. What percentage of 11th- and 12th-grade students are involved in at least one extracurricular activity?

Percentage of 11th Graders	Percentage of Schools
Less than 25 percent	8%
25-49 percent	24
50-74 percent	35
75 percent or more	33

mean = 56.0 percent of students

n = 1394

Percentage of 12th Graders	Percentage of Schools
Less than 25 percent	9%
25-49 percent	26
50-74 percent	35
75 percent or more	30

mean = 55.0 percent of students

n = 1384

25. What grading system(s) does your school use for 10th- to 12th-grade students?

System	Percentage of Schools
A-B-C-D-F	83.5%
Numerical	21.2
Percentages	7.6
Weighted (additional value for more difficult courses)	12.0
Dual (student chooses from two or more grading systems)	1.5
Pass-fail	34.0
Pass-withdraw	5.3
Verification of competency	3.5
Checklists of objectives	3.3
Written narrative evaluations	5.3
Conferences	13.2
Continuous progress	3.5
Self-evaluation	1.2
No grade reports	0.3
Other	1.2

n = 1440

26. In your opinion, how important are the following educational goals to parents in your school?

Goals	Very	Moder- ately	Margin- ally	Unim- portant	n
	(percentage of schools)				
Teaching the basic skills	90.1%	9.3%	0.6%	0.0%	1439
Developing high moral standards and citizenship	49.2	43.2	7.3	0.3	1439
Teaching students to get along with others	30.4	54.5	14.7	0.4	1425
Developing individual responsibility for the management of one's own learning program	16.7	47.1	32.7	3.5	1419
Preparing students for the labor market	49.2	42.9	7.5	0.3	1439
Preparing students for college	47.3	44.5	7.5	0.6	1435
Developing esthetic appreciation	6.9	35.2	47.5	10.4	1429

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND DECISIONMAKING

Frequency of Meetings

27 How frequently do you meet with the following district-level people to discuss school management or programs of instruction?

Group	Frequency							n
	At Least Once Week	2 or 3 Times a Month	Several Once a Month	Several Times a Year	Once a Year	Not at All	Not Appli- cable	
	(percentage of schools)							
Superintendent	40.5%	23.9%	18.0%	12.3%	1.9%	1.5%	0.9%	1420
Central office budget specialists	11.9	13.5	10.7	23.5	8.1	6.5	18.3	1074
Central office curriculum specialists	11.5	16.2	12.0	18.4	2.6	3.5	26.7	930
Area or regional administrators	3.2	7.5	22.1	23.0	7.6	6.1	21.8	1005
Principals of other schools	9.3	20.3	41.1	22.9	1.6	1.5	2.1	1398
Board advisory groups	0.5	5.7	21.0	26.5	8.0	14.1	18.4	1097

28. How frequently are the following school-level meetings held?

Group	Frequency						n
	At Least Once a Week	2 or 3 Times a Month	Several Once a Month	Several Times a Year	Once a Year	Not at All	Not Ap- plicable
	(percentage of schools)						
Regular faculty meetings	7.9%	21.7%	47.9%	22.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%
English department meetings	5.2	15.4	34.9	28.5	3.3	0.8	8.7
Math department meetings	4.0	13.9	34.0	29.3	4.3	1.2	9.5
Interdepartmental meetings	1.1	5.0	12.2	30.9	8.4	13.5	16.6
Department head meetings	7.8	13.4	26.3	18.4	2.9	3.4	21.8
Subunit head meetings	2.3	2.9	3.9	7.5	1.5	6.6	52.8
Administrative staff meetings	41.3	20.9	14.4	8.9	0.3	1.1	8.8
Policy or planning group meetings	5.5	10.8	20.2	34.7	4.0	2.8	13.6
PTA-type meetings	0.1	1.2	30.5	22.1	2.7	7.5	28.6
Parent advisory group meetings	0.3	1.4	23.2	29.8	6.1	6.9	23.5
Student council meetings	20.9	35.2	31.7	6.8	0.3	0.6	2.8

29. How many standing committees or ad hoc committees or task forces does your school have?

Number of Groups	Standing Committees	Ad hoc Committees or Task Forces
	(percentage of schools)	
None	35.7%	38.3%
1	14.8	15.5
2	15.3	20.8
3	13.5	11.7
4	8.7	6.6
5	4.4	3.0
6	3.6	2.0
7	1.1	0.6
8 or more	2.9	1.5
	n = 1408	n = 1385

n = 1408

n = 1385

Evaluating Teacher Performance

30. How often do your teachers receive a formal evaluation after their probationary period?

Frequency	Percentage of Schools
More than once a year	32.3%
Once a year	44.8
Every 2 or 3 years	17.0
Rarely or not at all	5.8
n = 1439	

31. Who participates in the formal evaluation of your teachers?

Personnel	Percentage of Schools
Principal	98.4%
Assistant principal(s) or deans	54.2
Subject-area supervisors	17.0
Department heads	26.9
Heads of subunits	1.0
Teachers: peer evaluations	4.4
Teachers: self-evaluation	24.5
Students	4.4
Parents	0.6
Others	4.0
n = 1438	

32. From October through March of the school year, about how often do you observe in classrooms?

Frequency	Percentage of Schools
Daily	6.1%
Several times a week	37.4
Once a week	13.0
2 or 3 times a month	17.4
Several times a year	24.8
Not at all	1.3
n = 1433	

Evaluating Your Performance as Principal

33. How often do you receive a formal evaluation?

Frequency	Percentage of Schools
More than once a year	11.3%
Once a year	57.6
Every 2 or 3 years	5.4
Rarely or not at all	25.8
n = 1431	

34. Who participates in the formal evaluation of your performance as principal?

Participants	Percentage of Schools
School board	23.3%
Superintendent	73.2
Central office or area administrators	28.1
Principal: self-evaluation	21.7
Assistant administrators	4.4
Teachers	10.5
School support staff (clerical, maintenance, etc.)	1.1
Students	2.0
Parents	1.7
Others	1.5
n = 1425	

RULES

35. What State, district, or school regulations govern your activity in the following areas?

Activity	Percentage of Schools Governed by Rules		
	State	District	School
Adding a new academic course	36.6%	69.1%	58.5%
Setting rules for student behavior	25.3	67.3	76.0
Determining course objectives	16.8	48.9	82.0
Setting conditions for early exit/early graduation	25.9	70.9	52.3
Adopting a new school grading practice	4.0	74.1	61.3
Setting criteria for evaluating teacher performance	20.0	80.3	49.3
Setting criteria for evaluating principal performance	10.2	81.0	26.4
Allocating school budget funds among departments, teachers, or activities	11.7	66.6	68.4

n = 1435

36. Which of the following rules exist in your school, and how strictly are they enforced?*

Rule	Rule Existence			n
	Formal	Informal	None	
	(percentage of schools)			
Student behavior				
Closed campus for students at lunch	57.6%	6.2%	36.3%	1430
Students responsible to the school for property damage	82.1	17.3	0.6	1422
Hall passes required	72.8	10.1	17.0	1432
"No smoking" rules	87.2	3.9	9.0	1427
Rules about student dress	30.5	34.2	35.4	1428
Teacher behavior				
Bringing an outside speaker in class	37.0	36.9	26.0	1429
Frequency of testing (weekly, midterm, final)	23.2	28.7	48.0	1428
Amount of homework given students	6.9	33.1	60.0	1424
Controlling disruptive students in class	68.7	23.9	7.5	1421
Dealing with parent complaints	35.8	40.7	23.5	1420

* Responses to the enforcement portion could not be interpreted because of the low number of valid responses.

37. Who approves the following types of teacher activities in your school?

Responses to this question were uninterpretable because of the phrasing of the question.

38. What percentage of your school's budget constitutes discretionary or contingency funds?

Percentage of Budget	Percentage of Schools
None	17%
1-4 percent	22
5-9 percent	20
10-14 percent	19
15 percent or more	22

mean = 13.0 percent of funds

n = 1003

39. Can teachers use discretionary or contingency funds for their individual classrooms?

Teachers' Use of Funds	Percentage of Schools
Yes; all	16.4%
Yes; depends on departments allocation policy	33.2
No	42.8
Other	7.4

n = 1250

Involvement in Decisionmaking

40. Who is usually involved in making decisions relating to the following school matters?

Decisionmaker	Teacher selection	Adding a new academic course	Adopting rules for student behavior	Determining course objectives	Evaluating the school's grading practices	Formulating school goals	Developing a budget for your school
	(percentage of schools)						
School board	56.3%	55.8%	74.3%	14.5%	34.4%	54.5%	59.5%
Superintendent	73.1	65.9	70.3	30.9	56.0	67.7	75.9
Central office administrators	35.8	39.3	25.3	28.1	30.0	30.4	42.1
You as principal	91.4	95.5	96.3	80.2	93.9	93.9	77.9
Assistant administrators or subunit heads	29.7	35.4	50.5	33.6	41.4	48.2	30.6
School policy or planning group	1.7	20.6	28.5	18.6	27.1	36.9	9.8
Guidance counselors	1.7	42.8	32.1	22.9	48.2	45.8	10.7
Department head(s)	35.1	58.9	21.0	59.0	46.6	48.4	43.1
Teacher union or organization	1.0	2.4	9.5	4.3	7.9	11.7	3.4
Teachers as individuals	6.8	67.3	54.5	83.1	63.4	62.2	32.3
Students—elected or appointed groups	1.5	22.5	47.8	10.0	17.7	32.7	2.5
Students as individuals	1.2	20.7	24.2	9.0	11.6	21.9	1.7
Parent and community groups	1.8	17.7	30.4	9.3	16.4	38.1	5.1
Issue not applicable to this school	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	2.5	0.8	1.0
	n = 1436	1436	1434	1426	1385	1416	1413

The Principal's Authority

41. Within your school, how much authority do you have to allocate school budget funds among departments?

Authority	Percentage of Schools
Complete	41.3%
Considerable	35.5
Little	16.0
None	7.2

n = 1437

42. How much authority do you have to make the choice between hiring one full-time teacher or hiring two teacher aides?

Authority	Percentage of Schools
Complete	12.1%
Considerable	52.9
Little	21.1
None	13.9

n = 1428

43. How much influence do you have in making decisions concerning the district's budget allocations to your school?

Influence	Percentage of Schools
Extensive	8.9%
Considerable	34.4
Little	41.6
None	15.1

n = 1432

44. How much authority do you have to fill teacher vacancies?

Authority	Percentage of Schools
Principal chooses; central office usually endorses	56.2%
Principal chooses within central office limits	33.4
Central office chooses	10.4

n = 1427

Problems

45. To what degree is each of these matters a problem in your school?

Problems	Degree of Severity				n
	Very serious	Serious	Minor	Not at all	
	(percentage of schools)				
School too small to offer a wide range of courses	6.4%	19.7%	41.5%	32.4%	1435
School too large to give students enough personal attention	1.9	8.0	31.7	58.4	1396
Inadequate instructional materials	0.9	9.4	56.8	32.8	1429
Not enough guidance counselors	4.3	15.8	41.0	38.8	1430
Teacher absenteeism	1.6	11.4	59.3	27.7	1423
Teacher union specifications	1.9	10.3	44.5	43.3	1405
Teachers' lack of commitment or motivation	1.6	13.5	68.7	16.2	1427
Teacher incompetence	0.6	4.0	74.9	20.5	1429
Teacher turnover	0.8	5.9	58.7	34.6	1422
Student absenteeism (entire day)	4.6	30.4	57.2	7.8	1419
Students' cutting classes	4.8	25.4	60.1	9.7	1425
Student apathy	5.1	35.8	54.4	4.7	1425
Student disruptiveness	0.3	6.7	77.2	15.8	1417
Parents' lack of interest in students' progress	3.2	33.1	58.4	5.3	1424
Parents' lack of involvement in school matters	5.3	35.1	52.3	7.3	1412
District office interference with principal's leadership	1.3	5.6	45.8	47.3	1419
State-imposed curriculum restrictions	1.1	7.7	62.0	29.2	1420
Implementing Federal or State requirements for equal opportunity (e.g., desegregation, employment)	2.5	8.9	55.6	33.0	1404
Too much paperwork in complying with:					
District requirements	4.7	15.3	54.8	25.1	1390
State requirements	7.2	28.5	50.9	13.4	140
Federal requirements	12.2	30.2	44.8	12.7	1399
Other	20.2	31.2	30.6	17.9	173

Conflict

46. Generally speaking, how often would you say conflict occurs within your school?

Conflict	Frequency				n
	Daily	At least once a week	At least once a month	Rarely or never	
	(percentage of schools)				
Among students	15.2%	28.7%	32.9%	23.1%	1417
Among teachers	1.8	8.4	25.0	64.8	1422
Between teachers and students	16.7	28.8	32.3	22.2	1417
Between teachers and principal	0.6	6.4	29.0	64.0	1411
Between teachers and parents	0.9	9.7	45.1	44.3	1405
Between school administrators and parents	1.3	9.8	39.9	49.0	1415
Between school and central office	1.2	3.6	17.2	78.0	1405

Note: The interpretability of this item is somewhat limited in that principals variously interpreted conflict. Some took it to mean a verbal altercation, others a physical confrontation, and so forth.

Change

47. In the past 5 years, how have things changed in your school?

Characteristic	Changes			n
	Increased	Stayed about the same	Decreased	
	(percentage of schools)			
Extent of joint planning among teachers	51.9%	44.5%	3.6%	1408
Extent of interdependence among departments	26.7	69.9	3.5	1387
Number of persons involved in school decisionmaking	61.9	36.0	2.1	1412
Number of required courses	35.3	58.1	6.5	1407
Number of elective courses	64.0	28.5	7.5	1405
Student alternatives for meeting course or graduation requirements	51.0	47.7	1.3	1399
Range of alternative grading practices	13.8	83.6	2.6	1400
Number of staff in general	39.1	42.4	18.5	1402
Number of specialists (e.g., special education, psycholo- gists, resource teachers, media specialists, etc.)	52.8	39.7	7.5	1407
Emphasis on basic reading, writing and math skills	77.7	21.3	0.9	1410
Your school's enrollment	42.5	32.5	25.0	1402
Student academic achievement (standardized test scores)	24.0	64.2	11.8	1394
Your school's per-pupil budget ^a	60.2	30.9	8.9	1406
Average class size	23.4	59.1	17.5	1404
Number of student activities	56.1	39.6	4.3	1405
Use of school facilities for community-related activities	59.0	39.1	1.9	1407
Educational programs for new clientele (e.g., adults)	35.7	59.8	4.4	1397

^a The interpretive value of this item is questionable since it did not distinguish between per-pupil budget changes in dollar terms and in real terms.

STUDENTS

48. In 1976-77, what percentage of your current total student body belonged to the following groups?

Ethnic Origin	Mean Student Body Proportions over All Schools
White	84.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.9
Asian/Pacific islander	0.6
Black	9.6
Hispanic	4.2
Other	0.4

n = 1426

Percentage Nonwhite Students	Percentage of Schools
None (all white)	19%
1-4 percent	31
5-19 percent	24
20 percent or more	25

n = 1426

49. During 1976-77, approximately what percentage of your students were bused for racial balance?

Percentage Bused In	Percentage of Schools
None	92%
1-19 percent	4
20 percent or more	4

mean percentage of students bused in = 2.0%

n = 832

50. After graduation, approximately what percentage of the class of June 1976 entered the following?

Postgraduate Activity	Average Percentage of Students	n
2-year college	16.6%	1284
4-year college	28.4	1362
Postsecondary vocational school	8.6	1194
Full-time labor market	37.8	1312
Armed services	5.6	1274

- 51a. Approximately what percentage of the class of 1977 graduated early (or left early with a diploma or equivalent)?

Percentage of Early Graduates	Percentage of Schools
None	24%
1-2 percent	26
3-5 percent	18
6-10	20
Over 10 percent	12
mean percentage of early graduates = 5.5%	
n = 1180	

- 51b. Approximately what percentage of the class of 1977 dropped out, without obtaining a diploma and without transferring to another school?

Percentage of Dropouts	Percentage of Schools
None	6%
1-2 percent	33
3-5 percent	32
6-10 percent	18
Over 10 percent	11
mean percentage of dropouts = 5.1%	
n = 1315	

- 52a. About what percentage of your 10th- to 12th-grade students are taking remedial work in reading?

Percentage of Students	Percentage of Schools
None	13%
1-4 percent	21
5-9 percent	24
10-14 percent	21
15 percent or more	21
mean percentage of students = 9.3%	
n = 1256	

- 52b. About what percentage of your 10th- to 12th-grade students are taking remedial work in math?

Percentage of Students	Percentage of Schools
None	18%
1-4 percent	22
5-9 percent	23
10-14 percent	18
15 percent or more	19
mean percentage of students = 8.4%	
n = 1194	

53. What phrase best describes the occupations of your students' parents?

Parental Occupation	Percentage of Schools
Almost all white-collar/professional	3.6%
Mostly white-collar; some blue-collar	11.4
Evenly mixed	23.2
Mostly blue-collar, some white-collar	43.1
Almost all blue-collar/laborer	17.5
Mostly unemployed or on welfare	1.3
n = 1435	

54. What phrase best describes the housing in which your students' parents live?

Type of Housing	Percentage of Schools
Almost all owner-occupied homes	26.6%
Mostly owner-occupied, some rental apartments	44.9
Evenly mixed	22.0
Mostly rental unit, some owner-occupied homes	5.7
Almost all rental units	0.8
n = 1438	

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL DISTRICT

55. How would the area served by your school be described?

Type of Area	Percentage of Schools
Urban: Industrial, commercial (150,000+)	4.2%
Urban: Residential (150,000+)	6.1
Suburban: Adjacent to city of 150,000+	27.6
Medium city (25,000-149,999)	10.9
Nonmetropolitan: noncommuting (-25,000)	51.2
n = 1421	

56. Which of the following types of postsecondary schools are located within about 5 miles of your school?

Type of School	Percentage of Schools
2-year college	42.2%
4-year college or university	37.7
Postsecondary vocational school	31.1
Adult or continuing education school	43.4
n = 1448	

57. What is your school district's current average per-pupil expenditure (excepting for capital outlay and debt service)?

District Per-Pupil Expenditure	Percentage of Schools
Less than \$900	20%
\$900-1,099	16
\$1,100-1,299	23
\$1,300-1,499	16
\$1,500-1,699	10
\$1,700 or more	15

mean district per-pupil expenditure = \$1,264.

n = 1076

SCHOOL STAFF

58. How many of the following persons are on your school's professional staff?

Staff Members	Mean No. of Persons
Assistant principals and deans	1.53
Guidance counselors	2.74
Classroom teachers	46.52
Specialists (e.g., special education, resource teachers, media specialists, psychologists, etc.)	2.64
Librarians	1.21
Teacher aides	2.29
Volunteers	1.28
Student (practice) teachers	2.87

n = 1438

59. What percentage of the school's professional staff belongs to the following groups?

Ethnic Group	Average Percentage of Staff
White	91.4%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0.3
Asian/Pacific islander	0.5
Black	5.8
Hispanic	1.48
Other	0.3

n = 1422

Percentage Nonwhite Staff	Percentage of Schools
None (all white)	48%
1-4 percent	17
5-9 percent	10
10-29 percent	14
30 percent or more	11

60. What is the sexual make-up of your professional staff?

Percentage Woman Faculty	Percent Schools
0-33%	17%
34-49	43
50-66	32
67-100	4

Mean percentage female: 44.4%

n = 1448

61. How many days of inservice education for teachers were scheduled by your school or district between June 1976 and June 1977?

Number of Inservice Days	Percentage of Schools
None	4%
1-2	28
3-4	31
5-6	19
7 or more	18

mean number of inservice days = 4.8

n = 1351

62. Including the 1976-77 school year, what is your professional experience?

Years as Principal of this School	Percentage of Principals
One year or less	19%
2-3	23
4-5	16
6-7	12
8-9	11
10 years or more	19

mean number of years as principal of this school = 5.8

Years as Principal of Another School	Percentage of Principals
None	57%
1-2	10
3-4	9
5-6	9
7 years or more	15

mean number of years as principal of another school = 2.6

Years as School Administrator Other than Principal	Percentage of Principals
None	44%
1-2	16
3-4	16
5-6	11
7 years or more	13

mean number of years as school administrator other than principal = 2.7

Years as Secondary School Teacher	Percentage of Principals
None	10%
1-3	10
4-6	24
7-9	24
10 years or more	33

mean number of years as secondary school teacher = 7.8

n = 1430 for all sections shown above.

63. Including yourself, how many principals or acting principals has your school had in the last 10 years?

Number of Principals or Acting Principals	Percentage of Schools
1	22.5%
2	35.2
3	22.0
4 or more	20.3
n = 1432	

64. When you were appointed principal of your school, where were you working?

Workplace	Percentage of Principals
Working in present school district	59.5%
Working someplace else	38.9
Engaged in other activities (e.g., graduate school, military)	1.5
n = 1438	

65. What is your highest earned degree?

Degree	Percentage of Principals
Bachelor's	1.6%
Bachelor's plus 5th-year credential	1.7
Master's in an educational field	28.9
Master's in field other than education	2.0
Master's plus additional graduate work	48.2
Ed. Specialist	8.5
Ed.D.	6.0
Ph.D.	2.1
Another type of degree	1.0
n = 1429	

66. How important are the following responsibilities to you, as principal?

Responsibility	Importance				n
	Very	Moder- ately	Margin- ally	Unim- portant	
(percentage of principals)					
Working closely with teachers on instruction	83.4%	14.5%	1.9%	0.1%	1437
Allowing teachers to instruct according to personal preference	34.7	55.4	9.4	0.4	1408
Enforcing school rules and policies	75.7	22.4	1.9	0.0	1437
Involving numerous people in school decisionmaking	42.8	46.7	9.8	0.8	1433
Managing the day-to-day operation of the school	69.2	26.7	4.0	0.1	1434
Managing the school budget	39.9	37.7	18.2	4.3	1426
Coordinating with district office	43.5	43.1	11.5	1.9	1415
Relating personally with students	78.9	19.0	2.0	0.1	1434
Relating personally with parents and community	74.1	24.3	1.3	0.2	1430
Resolving or mediating conflicts	69.3	27.5	2.9	0.3	1431
Long-range planning; setting goals	65.5	31.6	2.8	0.1	1431

67. How important are the following educational goals to you, as principal?

Goals	Importance				n
	Very	Moderately	Marginally	Unimportant	
(percentage of principals)					
Teaching basic skills	93.6%	6.0%	0.3%	0.0%	1440
Developing high moral standards and citizenship	81.9	17.2	0.8	0.1	1438
Teaching students to get along with others	78.2	20.6	1.3	0.0	1438
Developing individual responsibility for the management of one's own learning program	56.2	38.7	4.4	0.6	1417
Preparing students for the labor market	67.0	30.6	2.3	0.1	1432
Preparing students for college	53.7	42.9	3.1	0.2	1432
Developing esthetic appreciation	32.8	54.0	12.4	0.8	1425

68. How much influence do you believe you have in district-level decisionmaking?

Influence	Percentage of Principals
Great deal	31.9%
Moderate amount	49.7
Small amount	15.2
Practically none	3.2
n = 1431	

69. In general, how satisfied are you with the following?

Job Characteristic	Satisfaction				n
	Very Satisfied	Some-what Satisfied	Some-what Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
	(percentage of principals)				
Occupation as principal	65.4%	29.1%	4.7%	0.8%	1438
Faculty of your school	48.0	46.5	5.2	0.2	1432
Students' achievement	24.6	58.8	15.5	1.0	1435
Relationships with district office	51.6	35.7	10.2	2.5	1422
Relationships with parents and community	48.0	46.1	5.6	0.3	1435
Performance of your school board	35.3	39.6	18.7	6.4	1431

70. Are you male or female?

Male = 98.3%

Female = 1.7%

n = 1435

71. What is your age?

Age	Percentage of Principals
Under 25	0.1%
25-34	13.3
35-44	39.4
45-54	35.2
55+	12.0

n = 1439

72. What is your racial or ethnic group?

Ethnic Group	Percentage of Principals
White	94.2%
American Indian/Alaskan native	0.4
Asian/Pacific islander	0.5
Black	3.8
Hispanic	0.8
Other	0.3

n = 1435

Appendix B

Sampling Plan and Responses

A 13-percent sample (2,000 schools) was chosen from the universe of 15,407 secondary schools with a 12th grade. Two stratifying criteria were used, one representing four geographic regions of the country, and the other representing three metropolitan status categories:

The components were as follows:

Regions of the Country

East: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia;

Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin;

South: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia;

West: Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.

Metropolitan Status

This designation was based on U.S. Census Bureau definitions. An SMSA consists of a county, or group of contiguous counties, containing a city of 50,000 or more.

Urban: school located in a central city (50,000 or more) of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA).

Suburban: school located outside the designated central city but still within the SMSA.

Rural: school outside of an SMSA.

This stratifying design resulted in 12 cells—four regional categories by three metropolitan status categories. For example, a given cell would contain Eastern urban schools, Western suburban schools, and so forth.

School size was then taken into account by sampling proportionally to the likelihood of a school's presence in a cell. Twelfth-grade enrollment was used as a proxy for school size. The percentage of all 12th-grade students in each cell was calculated. This percentage was used to calculate the number of schools to be drawn from each cell.

Within each cell, schools were arranged in order of the size of their 12th-grade enrollments. Then, the percentage referred to above was used to pick a random start. To illustrate, assume that cell "Y" contains 4,000 schools. These schools enroll 10 percent of all 12th-grade students in the country. Of the 2,000-school sample to be drawn for the survey, 10 percent, or 200, of them are to be drawn from cell "Y." The random start began 10 schools down on the list, and every 10th school was then selected.

The sampling procedure is illustrated in the following table, which uses hypothetical cells "X" and "Y" to show how the sample was drawn and how school size was taken into account.

	(a)	(b)	(c)
Cell	Number of schools in cell	Percentage of all 12th-grade students in cell	The number of schools sampled from each cell depends on that cell's proportion of 12th-grade students (b).
Cell "X"	2,000	20%	20% of 2,000 = 400 schools Cell "X" contains 2,000 schools, so 400/2,000 or every 5th school will be chosen.
Cell "Y"	4,000	10%	10% of 2,000 = 200 schools Cell "Y" contains 4,000 schools, so 200/4,000 or every 20th school will be chosen.

This sampling method assured that the number of schools in the sample represented the proportional number of students in the population that attend schools in the various cells. It also assured that small or rural schools were not overrepresented and that large or urban schools were not underrepresented.

The following table shows the number and proportion (in parentheses) of respondent schools in each cell.

Proportion of Sample in Each Cell

<u>Metropolitan Status</u>	<u>Region</u>			
	<u>East</u>	<u>Midwest</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
Urban	27 (1.9%)	26 (1.8%)	45 (3.1%)	12 (0.8%)
Suburban	251 (17.3%)	282 (19.5%)	147 (10.2%)	192 (13.3%)
Rural	104 (7.2%)	173 (11.9%)	131 (9.0%)	58 (4.0%)

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